STREET SPIRIT

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JUSTICE NEWS & HOMELESS BLUES IN THE BAY AREA

Seeking Peace in a World of Imprisoned Beauty

Kathy Kelly has devoted her life to acts of resistance and solidarity with the victims of warfare, bombs and poverty.

by Terry Messman



Kathy Kelly with Shoba, a young child who had just been rescued by her uncle from a deadly fire in an Afghan refugee camp.

While serving nine months in federal prison after her arrest for an anti-nuclear protest where she planted corn on a nuclear missile silo in Missouri, peace activist Kathy Kelly had a vivid awakening that she was living in "a world of imprisoned beauty."

In prison, Kelly met women who were captives in this world of imprisoned beauty, women who could just as easily have been her sisters-in-law or her next-door neighbors. To this day, she cites the courage of the women she met in prison as a guiding light in her work for peace and justice.

Women were cut off from their families and separated from their children for many years, often for minor economic crimes, yet they found a way to carry on despite their crushing burdens. The courage of women facing years of imprisonment was a revelation of the beauty of the human spirit — a world of beauty buried in the prison system.

Kelly has spent her life trying to defend the innocent people targeted by U.S. bombs, and the lives desecrated by poverty. She has been arrested dozens of times for acts of resistance to government officials and corporate executives responsible for war crimes and economic deprivation — the pillars of society who are almost never jailed for their crimes against humanity.

Kelly said, "The main people that threaten us are in the corporation offices and in the well-appointed salons at parties, and they *really* threaten us. They make weapons. They make alcohol, firearms and tobacco, and arms for the military. They steal from us, and they rob us. And who goes to jail? A woman who can't get an economic stake in her community unless she agrees to be the lookout for a two-bit drug transaction."

This jailhouse epiphany opened her eyes to the precious and irreplaceable lives that our society has caged behind prison walls, cast off into refugee camps, banished in homeless shelters, or left to

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Blood on the Tracks

A Dance of Resistance to the Weapons of Mass Murder

by Terry Messman

On September 1, 1987, S. Brian Willson, a Vietnam veteran born on the Fourth of July, sat down on the railroad tracks at the Concord Naval Weapons Station in a valiant effort to block trains carrying deadly shipments of bombs, nuclear warheads and anti-personnel weapons.

The military veteran nonviolently blocked the tracks to protest the "war crimes" and "crimes against peace" committed by the United States in Central America — crimes against peace as defined by the Nuremberg war-crime trials of Nazi leaders after World War II.

In a stunning turn of events that still shocks the conscience, this nonviolent protester of war crimes became a victim of a crime himself when a munitions train roared down the tracks, and instead of slowing down at the sight of nonviolent protesters, gathered speed and ran over Willson, severing his legs, fracturing his skull and spilling his blood on the tracks.

Twenty-five years later, on September 1, 2012, the victim of that nearly lethal assault returned to the train tracks where his blood once flowed — and began dancing. He was compelled to dance on two artificial limbs after both his legs were severed — but still, he was dancing.

As Willson began dancing on the thin, prosthetic legs that jut out of his cut-offs, I held my breath because he looked so fragile due to his disability. He seemed to be balanced precariously on the two skinny metal rods that have replaced his legs, but it soon became evident that he is very sure-footed, having had 25 years to become expert in their use.

Willson danced in resistance to the weapons of mass murder shipped from the Concord port to be rained down as a deadly fire on peasants in Central America. He danced in defiance of the train that maimed him and changed his life forever. And he danced in the hot sun in a swirling, joyous celebration of life.

It was an amazing testament to the strength of the human spirit.

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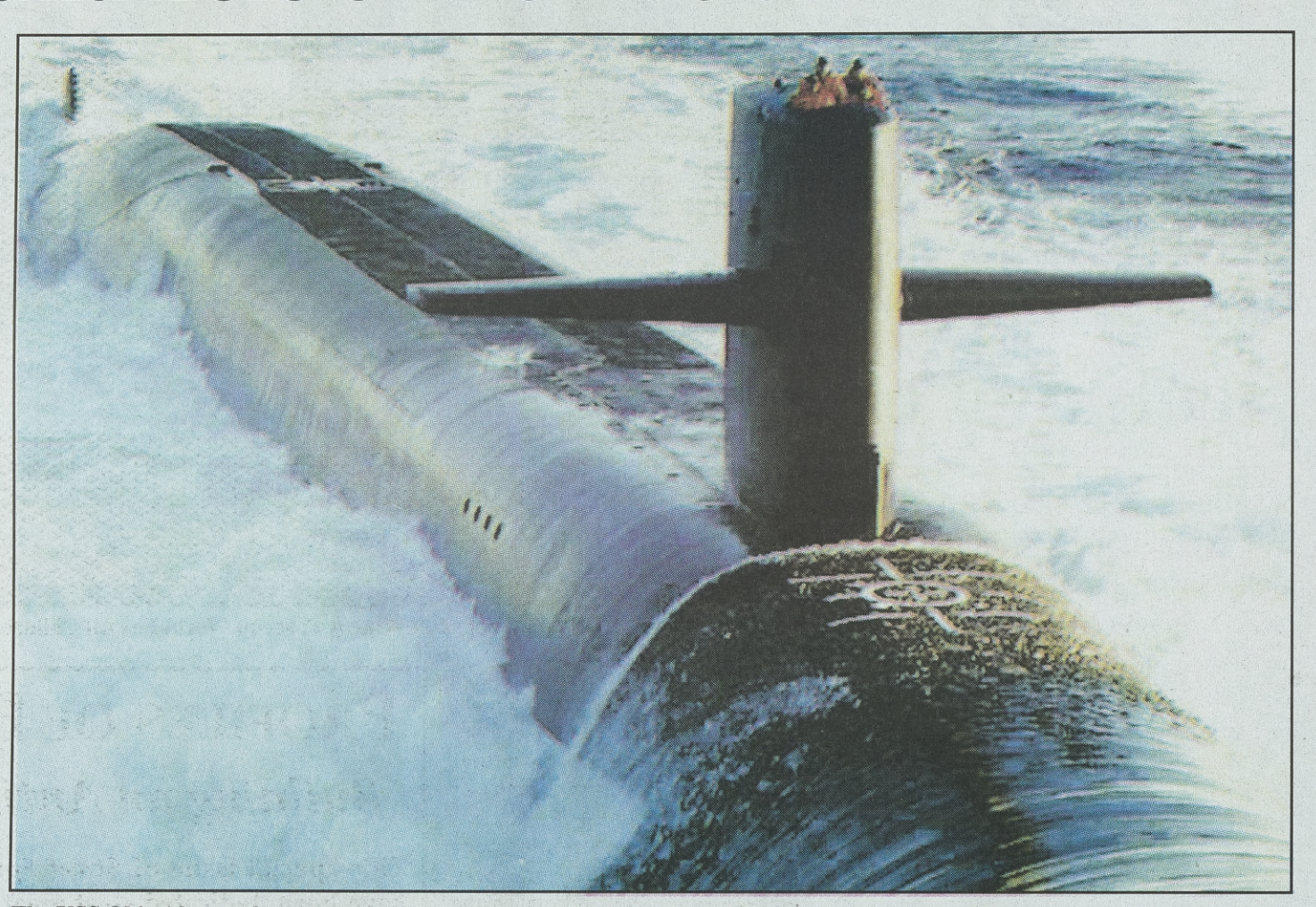


On prosthetic legs, Brian Willson dances with Sherri Maurin at Concord Naval Weapons Station in celebration of the work of Nuremberg Actions. Photo credit: Mike Hastie

Life at Ground Zero of the Nuclear Arms Race

How Jim and Shelley Douglass nonviolently confronted the Auschwitz of Puget Sound.

by Terry Messman



The USS Ohio (shown above) was the first in a fleet of Trident submarines. A single Trident sub has the explosive power of several thousand Hiroshima bombs and could destroy every city in an entire nation. Photo credit: www.naval-technology.com

Ruth Nelson, our oldest peace blockader at the age of 78, and the subject of a documentary film, *Mother of the Year*, was arrested with her son Jon Nelson, a Lutheran minister. Ruth stared down the Coast Guard's water cannons and said, "Whether I was thrown into those cold waters, whether it would have meant my life, I had to put my life on the line."

When Jim and Shelley Douglass joined one of the nation's most significant campaigns of nonviolent resistance to the nuclear arms race, it changed everything. They uprooted their lives, left their home behind, and literally moved right next door to Ground Zero of the nuclear arms race, in a home adjacent to the Bangor Naval Submarine Base in Kitsap County, Washington.

Their new next-door neighbors were a fleet of Trident submarines and an unimaginably destructive stockpile of Trident missiles in weapons bunkers.

In an interview, Jim Douglass starkly described the genocidal power of this weapons system. *"A single Trident submarine could destroy an entire country. A fleet of Tridents could destroy the world."*

Lockheed missile designer Robert Aldridge had visited the Douglasses at their home in Hedley, British Columbia, to warn them that Trident missiles were first-strike nuclear weapons due to their pinpoint accuracy and cataclysmic firepower, and would be based on Puget Sound near Seattle.

In response, Jim and Shelley Douglass co-founded Pacific Life Community (PLC) with other Canadian and American peace activists in January 1975 to begin the Trident campaign.

In November 1977, PLC members, including Jim and Shelley, purchased 3.8 acres of land with a little house next to the Bangor naval base, giving Trident resisters "a piece of the rock," as a local resident put it. They called their new site "Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action."

The Ground Zero Center sat on a piece of land that shared 330 feet of fence with the Bangor naval base. On one side of that fence, the U.S. Navy was equipping a fleet of Trident submarines with enough firepower to incinerate millions of civilians in a radioactive firestorm and destroy every major city in every country in the world. On the other side of the fence, Ground Zero began building a nonviolent movement based on the teachings of Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi.

On one side, U.S. marines with shoot-to-kill orders guarded nuclear warheads in storage bunkers. On the other side, activists held nonviolence trainings and prepared to go to jail for obstructing the arms race.

Ground Zero members gave leaflets to thousands of workers entering the Trident base every week for several years.

Activists by the hundreds were arrested for climbing the fences surrounding the naval base, walking inland to pray for peace at high-security nuclear weapons bunkers, blocking the White Trains carrying hydrogen bombs into the base, and sailing their small boats in a peace blockade of the massive Trident submarine.

Ground Zero's campaigns attempted to encompass all the dimensions of Gandhi's vision of nonviolence, from militant confrontation with injustice, to reverence for the lives of people on all sides in the conflict, to education and dialogue.

At times, that made their actions seem almost like a contradiction in terms. Even as Ground Zero organized some of the most militant acts of anti-nuclear resistance in the nation, it also strongly embraced the ethical values of nonviolence taught by Gandhi, King and Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

The same activists that were pushing nonviolence to its outer limits by staging increasingly radical confrontations with the U.S. military, were also committed to recognizing the humanity of naval base workers, both civilian and military. They spent hundreds of hours trying to dialogue with Trident base personnel and refused to see them as the enemies of peace.

Military Chaplain Resigns

Ground Zero's adherence to nonviolence and its sincere and friendly attempts to communicate with base workers influenced many naval employees to resign for reasons of conscience. This led to the highly visible resignation of the chaplain of the Trident base, Father Dave Becker, who decided he could no longer be "the chaplain of the Auschwitz of Puget Sound."

Ground Zero also inspired activists in hundreds of communities around the nation to hold vigils on railroad tracks to block the White Train shipments of nuclear warheads from the Pantex hydrogen bomb assembly plant in Amarillo, Texas, to the Bangor base.

One of Ground Zero's most far-reaching successes was the enormous impact it had on the nation's faith communities. Countless bishops, ministers, priests, rabbis and nuns were directly inspired by Ground Zero's nonviolent campaigns to become personally involved in speaking out against the nuclear arms race.

Jim Douglass was an influential theologian and former professor of religion at Notre Dame and the University of Hawaii, and the author of such renowned books of peace theology as *The Nonviolent Cross* and *Resistance and Contemplation*. Shelley Douglass also was a theologian and an eloquent writer on nonviolence, and several other members of Ground Zero were deeply involved in Protestant and Catholic churches and Buddhist orders.

Ground Zero activists had intensively studied the movement-building strategies and ethical values of Gandhi's satyagraha campaigns and the U.S. civil rights movement, and their commitment to principled nonviolent actions enabled them to have a profound impact on faith communities.

Undoubtedly, the most inspiring religious leader who worked closely with Ground Zero was Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, one of the most courageous opponents of nuclear weapons. The archbishop was deeply supportive of Ground Zero's nonviolent protests, and, in turn, Hunthausen greatly inspired Ground Zero and the peace movement as a whole when he became one of the nation's most outspoken voices for disarmament.

Hunthausen electrified the conscience of a nation when he denounced the Trident submarine as the "Auschwitz of Puget Sound" and called for massive civil disobedience and tax resistance to what he described as "nuclear murder and suicide."

His call to rebellion against the arms race, "Faith and Disarmament," was given on June 12, 1981, to the Pacific Northwest Synod of the Lutheran Church.

With the fiery urgency of a prophet, Hunthausen told the Lutheran clergy, "First-strike nuclear weapons are immoral and criminal. They benefit only arms corporations and the insane dreams of those who wish to 'win' a nuclear holocaust."

An Oceangoing Holocaust

In the immediate aftermath of the archbishop's uncompromising call to resistance, many Catholic bishops, Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis were moved to speak out against nuclear weapons.

And the peace movement found new hope. At last, someone with the power to make his voice heard had the courage to call the Trident nuclear submarine what it truly was: an oceangoing Holocaust loaded with weapons of mass incineration that could ignite a firestorm and slaughter millions. Most importantly, Hunthausen didn't merely call for a lukewarm set of reforms. He called for immediate nuclear disarmament and massive civil disobedience because of his conviction that nuclear weapons are criminal and immoral.

During the first years of the Reagan era, when many progressive voices were muzzled or ignored, Hunthausen called for the outright *abolition* of nuclear weapons.

The archbishop said, "The nuclear arms race can be stopped. Nuclear weapons can be abolished. That I believe with all my heart and faith, my sisters and brothers!"

What in the world could have ever led an American archbishop to denounce a U.S. weapons system as the Auschwitz of Puget Sound? We must retrace an amazing series of historic events that began in 1945, when Nazi Germany's leaders were put on trial for crimes against humanity in the town of Nuremberg, Germany, the symbolic birthplace of the Nazi Party.

During the Nuremberg trials, new cause for hope began to emerge from the destructive fires of war, and crucial principles of international law began to arise out of the ashes of Nazi concentration camps.

In the autumn of 1945, a few weeks after the end of World War II, Allied forces held a series of trials for political, economic and military leaders of Nazi Germany. In the first trial, 23 top officials of the Third Reich were charged by the International Military Tribunal with war crimes for their roles in planning unprovoked wars of aggression, and operating death camps where millions of civilians were systematically exterminated.

The Nuremberg Principles

Twelve subsequent Nuremberg Military Tribunals were held from December 1946 to April 1949, where an additional 185 Nazi defendants were prosecuted, including doctors accused of forced euthanasia, judges who implemented racial purity laws, officials in charge of "racial cleansing and resettlement," the directors of the Krupp Group who manufactured armaments with a brutal system of slave labor, and directors of the company that made Zyklon B, the poisonous cyanide gas used to murder countless Jewish civilians in concentration camps.

The Nuremberg Principles that resulted from these trials defined crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. They are now foundational principles of international law, and have served as models for The Universal Declaration of

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Life at Ground Zero of the Arms Race

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Human Rights, The Genocide Convention and the Geneva Convention.

Nazi officials had been put on trial by the victorious Allied forces, and yet international law is just that — an international set of principles that apply to *all* nations, not just to nations that lose a war.

War Crimes in Vietnam

Only 25 years after the Nuremberg trials were held, the U.S. government itself was being accused of war crimes in Vietnam when hundreds of thousands of defenseless civilians were deliberately massacred in saturation bombing campaigns, and targeted with napalm, Agent Orange, and anti-personnel bombs.

One particular protest against war crimes in Vietnam is the next step in this historic chain of events that connects the Nuremberg trials with the Trident submarine in the waters of Puget Sound.

In 1972, Jim Douglass, then a professor of religion at the University of Hawaii, committed civil disobedience based on the Nuremberg Principles by pouring his own blood on top-secret electronic warfare documents. Electronic warfare and anti-personnel bombs in Vietnam indiscriminately slaughtered children and civilians and thus constituted a war crime.

In a stunning historical twist, two U.S. attorneys who prosecuted Nazis for war crimes during the Nuremberg trials, traveled to Hawaii to defend Douglass after he was arrested for destroying files on electronic warfare at Hickam Air Force Base. Mary Kaufman and Benjamin Ferencz were U.S. prosecuting attorneys at Nuremberg, and now acted as defense lawyers for Douglass, citing international law to show that he was acting in accordance with Nuremberg Principles by pouring blood on top-secret files to bring war crimes to the attention of the American public.

Nuremberg attorney Mary Kaufman said Douglass's trial had "the most startling testimony ever given in a U.S. courtroom on the war in Vietnam." A former Air Force sergeant testified that while he was stationed at Hickam Air Base in Hawaii, he had witnessed "the deliberate targeting of a Laotian hospital for obliteration bombing, as well as the targeting of numerous other civilian objectives."

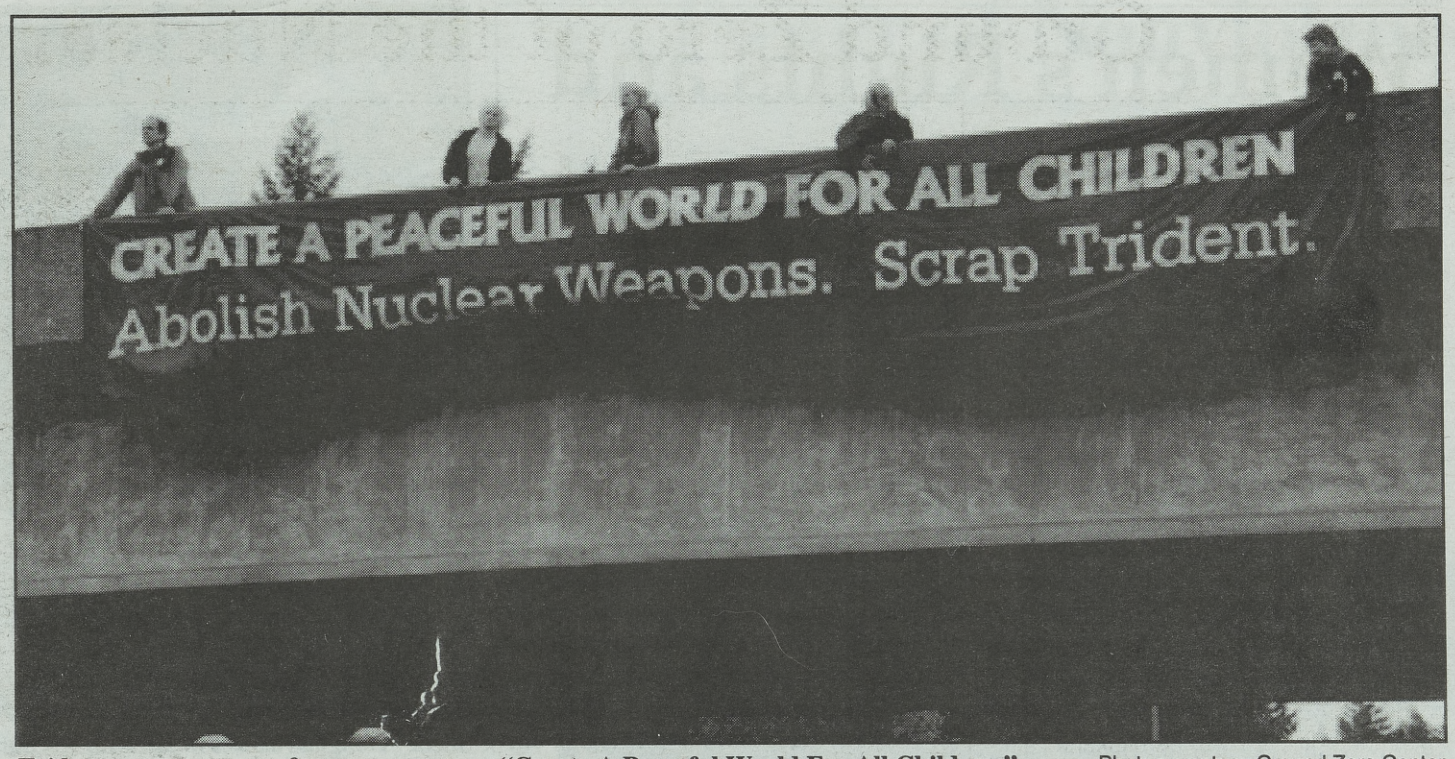
War Crimes at Lockheed

A key person who attended this trial was Lockheed missile designer Robert Aldridge. When Aldridge heard the Nuremberg attorneys describe the nature of war crimes, he was stunned to recognize that his own life's work in designing first-strike Trident nuclear missiles also constituted a war crime, and in the aftermath of that realization, he decided to resign from Lockheed Missiles and Space Corporation for reasons of conscience.

It is striking how this single act of conscience by one lone individual would affect the course of the anti-nuclear movement in the United States.

After the trial, Aldridge visited the Douglasses and warned them that the Pentagon was developing a submarine that would be the most lethal weapons system of all time. Trident's accuracy and explosive power made it a first-strike weapon — and therefore constituted a war crime. In response to Aldridge's act of conscience, Jim and Shelley helped launch the Trident campaign. In that way, the Nuremberg trials had set off a chain reaction of conscience that reached all the way to Puget Sound — the home port of the Trident submarine.

Then, this chain reaction continued onward, as the anti-nuclear resistance carried out by Ground Zero influenced Archbishop Hunthausen to publicly declare his support for these acts of civil disobedience — a bold and highly controversial step for a high church official to take, especially since the archbishop's pastoral responsibilities included thousands of employees at the Trident base.



Trident protesters on a freeway overpass: "Create A Peaceful World For All Children." Photos courtesy Ground Zero Center

Finally, the chain reaction of conscience that began with the Nuremberg trials in 1945 came full circle when the Seattle archbishop declared that the Trident submarine was a crime against humanity comparable in magnitude to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

The next step in this historic drama was not long in coming. A year or so after Hunthausen condemned the Trident submarine, the archbishop was on a boat with other religious leaders in the waters of Puget Sound, a seafaring prayer vigil that was offered in support and solidarity for the nonviolent activists who had launched the Trident peace blockade.

The confrontation between the unarmed power of nonviolence and the Auschwitz of Puget Sound came to a head at the Trident peace blockade on August 12, 1982. Jim Douglass and the Ground Zero Center were instrumental in organizing this dramatic and risk-filled blockade because of their determination to offer their lives in nonviolent resistance to the USS Ohio, the first Trident submarine.

My then-wife Darla Rucker and I lived for two weeks on board a small sailboat, the "Lizard of Woz," with Jim Douglass, captain Ted Phillips and his wife Eve, and several other activists who had prepared for a boat blockade of the USS Ohio.

Massive Coast Guard Attack

In the predawn hours of August 12, we received word that the USS Ohio was seen approaching the Hood Canal. The waters were suddenly swarming with a fleet of Coast Guard cutters that launched a preemptive attack on our tiny peace fleet.

It was David vs. Goliath on the waters of Puget Sound. The Trident submarine was truly a behemoth — four stories high and 560 feet long (nearly the length of two football fields). The Navy deployed a fleet of 99 heavily armed Coast Guard ships against our tiny boat blockade, a fleet larger than nearly every other navy in the world, as Seattle newspapers reported.

Our ragtag little peace flotilla had only two small sailboats and 20 tiny rowboats. Striking suddenly in the gray dawn, Coast Guard cutters rammed our sailboats, and then armed officers boarded the boats and pointed machine guns and M-16 rifles at our heads. From their ships, they trained high-intensity water cannons on us and shot our rowboats out of the water.

The Seattle newspapers called it "The Battle of Oak Bay," and published photographs of Coast Guard boats attacking our fleet with water cannons. The next day's *Seattle Times* pictured me in my wetsuit swimming in the cold waters of Puget Sound after the water-cannon assault had capsized my boat.

Ruth Nelson, age 78, had been the subject of a film documentary, *Mother of the Year*. She was arrested that day with her son Jon Nelson, a Lutheran minister. Our oldest peace blockader, Ruth stared down the Coast Guard's water cannons. She said, "Whether I was thrown into those cold waters, whether it would have meant my life, I had to put my life on the line."

In the days leading up to the boat blockade, we had trained with Greenpeace volunteers who warned us that if we were swept into the cold, turbulent waters of Puget Sound, we would be at risk of death. All 46 activists who agreed to take part in the blockade knew we were facing 10 years in prison — and serious risks to our lives.

In his article, "The Peace Blockade and the Rise of Nonviolent Civil Disobedience," Matt Dundas interviewed boat blockaders Kim Wahl and Renee Krisco about those risks. Their responses revealed the attitudes shared by the peace blockaders on the eve of the confrontation with the USS Ohio.

We Thought We'd Die in the Water

"Despite threats of ten years in prison and a $10,000 fine, none of the protesters backed out." Wahl said, "I just knew in my heart that I had to do it." Looking back later, she asked her friend and fellow blockader Renee Krisco why they hadn't thought much about the potential long-term prison sentences. "Because we thought we'd die in the water," said Krisco.

No one lost their life that day, although our boats were rammed by Coast Guard ships and sprayed with water cannons that sent us flying into the waters of Puget Sound. We were fished out of the water with long metal pikes, then arrested at gunpoint. One reporter wrote that the arrests were so volatile, with so many heavy weapons trained on protesters, that "had a firecracker gone off at a critical moment, a massacre could have resulted."

One of the most moving occurrences during this campaign was the vigil held on a prayer boat in solidarity with our peace blockade. That boat carried Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen and 12 bishops and church leaders from six denominations of the Church Council of Greater Seattle.

The chain reaction of conscience had traveled through the decades, person to person, from the courtroom in Nuremberg to the waters of Puget Sound.

"The Challenge of Peace"

When Archbishop Hunthausen announced that he would withhold half of his federal income tax in resistance to the nuclear arms race, he said, "The very existence of humanity is at stake."

As Jim Douglass explained in an interview with *Street Spirit*, Archbishop Hunthausen's uncompromising condemnation of nuclear weapons had sparked priest after priest, bishop after bishop, to condemn the arms race. That chain reaction eventually resulted in the entire body of the U.S. Catholic Bishops releasing their pastoral letter on nuclear weapons, "The Challenge of Peace" in 1983.

The bishops' pastoral letter broke through the public silence surrounding nuclear weapons in a major way, and gave a great deal of hope to the movement for nuclear disarmament. Douglass said, "Hunthausen played a huge role in the process that resulted in the bishops' statement. Hunthausen played a HUGE role. He would never say that, obviously."

Jim and Shelley Douglass played a HUGE role in the process that resulted in Archbishop Hunthausen's own acts of conscience and resistance. They would never say that, obviously.

Epilogue: Reverence for Life

The launching of a fleet of Trident submarines — the most lethal weapons system in history — created a perilous instability in an already dangerous arms race.

Our peace blockade on the water as the first Trident submarine approached was a way of vividly showing the life-and-death issues at stake. Yet we were only one small part of the fabric of life that day.

Reverence for life was the point of everything at that moment. We were simply taking a modest stand for peace and reminding the world of the beauty of life, just like the trees and birds and wildflowers and the seals swimming in Puget Sound — all linked in the web of life.

PROFILES OF PEACEMAKERS

Building an Anti-War Movement

This special issue of *Street Spirit* features peacemakers who have been dedicated — at great personal cost — to ending war and abolishing weapons of mass extermination. This anthology gathers profiles of peace activists covered in *Street Spirit's* past four years. More than ever, the future of humanity depends on understanding the beatitudes: *"Blessed are the peacemakers."*

Women's Rights and the Peace Movement

"We are reclaiming our history—remembering all those founding mothers, all those women who kept the movement going without credit for so long, all the contributions we women have made and undervalued." — Shelley Douglass



Shelley Douglass shares bread with Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen at peace vigil on the railroad tracks at the Bangor Naval Base, in protest of Trident submarines.

by Terry Messman

The path of nonviolence is a lifelong journey that may lead in unexpected directions to far-distant destinations.

One meaningful milestone on Shelley Douglass's path of nonviolence came on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 16, 1983, when she walked down the railroad tracks and deliberately trespassed into the Bangor naval base with Karol Schulkin and Mary Grondin from the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

As the three women walked down the tracks used to transport nuclear warheads and missile motors into the naval base, they posted photographs of the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — a prophetic warning of the catastrophic consequences of Trident nuclear submarines.

The photos revealed the human face of war, the face of defenseless civilians struck down in a nuclear holocaust. The women continued on this pilgrimage into the heart of the Trident base, until security officers arrested them an hour after they began.

Their journey into the Trident base was both a political call for nuclear disarmament and a spiritual call to turn away from the ways of war. The three women spoke from the heart of their faith tradition by praying for peace and seeking arrest on Ash Wednesday.

The statement they released after their arrest merged the political and the spiritual, invoking both the principles of international law and the spiritual law of love. "We walk these tracks as an appeal to all people to take seriously the principles of international law against indiscriminate and aggressive weapons. We walk these tracks as an appeal to all people to heed the law of love written by our creator in the human heart."

'Not in My Name'

After their arrest, Shelley Douglass was jailed for 60 days. Karol Schulkin was also jailed and told the court: "I must stand up and say, 'no more' — no more bombings and burning of people and lands. Not in my name. I reclaim my humanity. I will act on what I know. I refuse to remain silent."

As Ground Zero continued to organize acts of resistance to the Trident submarine, Shelley was led onward by a deeper understanding of what was at stake. She said, "We objected not to Trident in particular but to the entire arms race, and to the new first-strike policy which Trident represents.

"Our resistance had to be deep enough to address the societal causes of the arms race — our own selfishness and greed, our system's exploitation of people for profit, the oppression of people based on their race, age, or sex. If a nonviolent campaign was to be successful in the deepest sense, it had to include these sources of violence and take into account the pervasive nature of many forms of violence in our lives."

The history of nonviolent organizing for social change encompasses a vast and imaginative diversity of movements for peace and justice — a far richer legacy of resistance than the public generally realizes. The larger picture of nonviolence involves literally thousands of creative campaigns to protect the entire web of life wherever it is imperiled — "reweaving the web of life," as a groundbreaking anthology of feminist writings on nonviolence once described it.

In fact, there are as many forms of creative nonviolence as there are threats to life on the planet. Shelley Douglass's journey began with antiwar actions during the Vietnam War, and led onward to an inventive array of nonviolent methods to resist nuclear weapons, poverty and homelessness, racism and the death penalty.

With her husband, the theologian and peace activist Jim Douglass, Shelley first became deeply involved in the antiwar movement of the 1960s, when she and Jim committed civil disobedience in protest of U.S. war crimes in Vietnam.

Simultaneous Struggle Against Both War and Poverty

From the beginning, she was equally drawn to the Catholic Worker vision of resisting not only the violence of war, but also the violence of poverty and hunger and homelessness. She devoted most of her waking hours to antiwar organizing in the 1960s, and to anti-nuclear activism in the 1970s and 1980s, yet she always kept alive the hope of one day offering sanctuary to poor and homeless people.

Many years later on her deepening path of nonviolence, Shelley Douglass would create a house of hospitality for homeless families in Alabama, organize against the death penalty and visit prisoners on death row, and travel to Iraq to bring medicine to children victimized by U.S. sanctions.

Her sense of nonviolence extended beyond antiwar actions because she clearly saw the connections between militarism and the other deeply entrenched forms of violence in American life. She wrote, "We believe that violence must be confronted on all levels — in sexism, racism, economic injustice, exploitation of the land."

Although the anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s and 1980s rarely made the connection between militarism and the economic injustice faced by poor people, low-wage workers, and homeless and hungry people in the inner city, Shelley Douglass repeatedly made those connections in the pages of the *Ground Zero* newspaper.

She wrote: "Anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear is well aware that we ignore the poor and suffering, while giving admiration to those who have wealth and power. In our government the same values apply: taxes are cut for the rich; assistance programs are cut from the poor. The rich are enabled to get richer, the poor are forced to get poorer."

Soon, her voice became even more passionate and outraged: "The destruction of creation and its creatures is done in the name of profit, convenience, wealth. The truth is that capitalism is poison, and we are its victims. Dorothy Day was quite clear and prophetic when she said that the fault lies in 'this filthy, rotten system.'"

The Pacific Life Community

Her involvement in the decades-long confrontation with the Trident nuclear submarine began suddenly one day when, out of the blue, Trident missile designer Robert Aldridge showed up at Shelly and Jim's doorstep bearing an unexpected — and somewhat unwelcome — call to renewed resistance to the arms race.

It could not have come at a more difficult time for the activists who would soon form the Pacific Life Community and the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

They were still suffering burn-out and fatigue from years of stormy protests against the Vietnam War, and from enduring the police repression, multiple arrests, trials that dragged on for years and long jail sentences. Relationships had broken apart, families had been separated by jail bars, and many were overloaded with anguish from a war that never seemed to end.

Now, they were once again being called into another colossal struggle against impossible odds — a showdown with a nuclear leviathan. Those who had already paid the heavy costs of resistance realized that if they were to confront the most destructive weapons system of all time, they would have to take better care of each other and build supportive communities.

The Pacific Life Community was founded by a small group of activists who were still recovering from exhaustion after years of resistance to the Vietnam War. They were still committed to peacemaking, but for these activists, embracing a new political struggle against nuclear weapons meant something far more personal than simply using the methods of Gandhi and King to build a movement.

It meant embracing nonviolence as a way of life, trying to make peace on both the outer political level and in their inner personal lives.

Shelley and Jim Douglass soon made the fateful decision to move right next to the Bangor Naval Base near Seattle, where they lived next door to hundreds of nuclear warheads with the explosive power of thousands of Hiroshima bombs. They devoted many years of their lives to resisting the Navy's fleet of Trident nuclear submarines, and their repeated acts of civil disobedience often resulted in months-long jail sentences.

Women in the Peace Movement

The many issues involving women's rights and the well-being of children and families were of vital importance in the early days of the anti-nuclear movement in the Pacific Northwest in the 1970s, and continuing through the 1980s and beyond.

From the beginning, the Pacific Life Community and Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action put forth a consistent message about the importance of feminist principles to the larger peace movement.

The affinity group formed by Shelley and Jim Douglass was named "Luna" — symbolically honoring the feminine spirit of peacemaking. The Douglasses constantly said that the movement to abolish nuclear weapons had to be an anti-sexist and anti-racist movement.

The Intimate Oppression

At the end of the 1960s, a generation of women who had dedicated themselves wholeheartedly to the antiwar movement were increasingly aware of the destructive personal costs they had paid in those years. Many felt exploited and oppressed by a patriarchal system that they confronted not only in the form of the Pentagon's wars and military hierarchy, but even in the peace movement itself.

It was the discovery of an intimate betrayal. How could the same movement that worked for human liberation subject so many women to dehumanizing treatment and refuse to honor them as equals?

Shelley Douglass reflected on women's role in the peace movement in her articles, "Beyond Patriarchy," in *Fellowship* magazine, and "Nonviolence and Feminism" in *Peace Is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence* (ed. Walter Wink, Orbis Books).

"Those times took a heavy toll," she wrote in describing the unequal status and lack of respect that women faced in the movements for peace and civil rights.

It was a demoralizing and intolerable contradiction. As Douglass wrote, "This tragic waste of potential and unconscious dehumanization took place in a movement that only wanted the common good."

"Women were expected to make coffee and provide refreshments while men planned strategy and did resistance actions. Women kept the home-fires burning while men organized, acted, and went to jail. Women bore and raised children and created the homes to which the men returned. Women did leaflets in the thousands, typed letters, licked stamps, marched in demonstrations."

No Voice in the Movement

Although women did a great deal of the essential work in building social-change movements, they were rarely visible or vocal leaders. That was not their expected role. According to Douglass, even in cities where "women have been the backbone of the peace movement for years," they were not taken seriously and were locked in lower-echelon positions.

"We rarely spoke at demonstrations; our actions did not make us celebrities like the men. When women went to jail, they lacked strong community support. They had no knowledge, by and large, of their historic role in the peace movement."

That last point is especially troubling, given the groundbreaking and heroic roles played by women in movements throughout our nation's history.

Women who objected to this second-class treatment often met only scorn and incomprehension from the male leaders of peace and civil rights groups. But they would not be silenced. Many began realizing that they were not just facing personal problems, but rather widespread inequities caused by gender inequality.

Douglass explained, "We realized that our feelings were not just personal problems; they were political, the results of a system that exploited us all. We were not

See **Women's Rights and Peace** *page 5*

Discovering the Unexpected Power of Nonviolence

"We found that during the period of 1900 to 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were about twice as effective as violent ones in achieving their goals." — Erica Chenoweth

by Terry Messman

In a groundbreaking effort to systematically study and compare success rates of violent and nonviolent social-change movements, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan carefully researched 323 social-change campaigns from 1900 to 2006. Chenoweth and Stephan's astonishing finding is that campaigns of nonviolent resistance are nearly twice as likely to succeed as violent uprisings.

In their book, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,* the authors found that far greater numbers of people from more diverse parts of society joined nonviolent campaigns than violent ones. This greater level of participation translates into more people who can demonstrate for change, and withdraw their cooperation from an unjust regime.

In addition, Chenoweth and Stephan found that when nonviolent movements overthrow an unjust regime, the victorious resistance groups are far more likely to establish democracies and protect human rights, and far less likely to lapse into civil war than their violent counterparts.

Their innovative research may be making heads spin in the circles of international security studies and military analysts, but it was also a dramatic surprise to one of the authors, Erica Chenoweth.

When Chenoweth first attended a workshop on nonviolent resistance held by Maria Stephan, she did so as a "complete skeptic," in her own words. "I was the one in the back of the room who was really irritating everyone else," she said. "I was such a devil's advocate for armed uprisings."

Chenoweth had never fully paid attention to such arcane subjects as nonviolent movements or "people power." She was more well-versed in its diametric opposite — the uses of military power.

Chenoweth is an Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University, and teaches courses on international security, terrorism, civil war and contemporary warfare. In an interview with *Street Spirit,* she said, "I would call myself a traditional guns-and-bombs scholar, following the tradition of people like Tom Schelling."

Stephan, on the other hand, was an expert in the study of nonviolent movements as an educational coordinator for the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict. She was teaching a workshop called "People Power and Pedagogy" to introduce the topic of nonviolent resistance to scholars in the field of security studies.

When Stephan discussed cases in the Philippines and Serbia where nonviolent resistance had achieved what years of armed uprising had been unable to accomplish, Chenoweth expressed such strong skepticism about nonviolent movements that people suggested she do a systematic comparison of the two kinds of struggles.

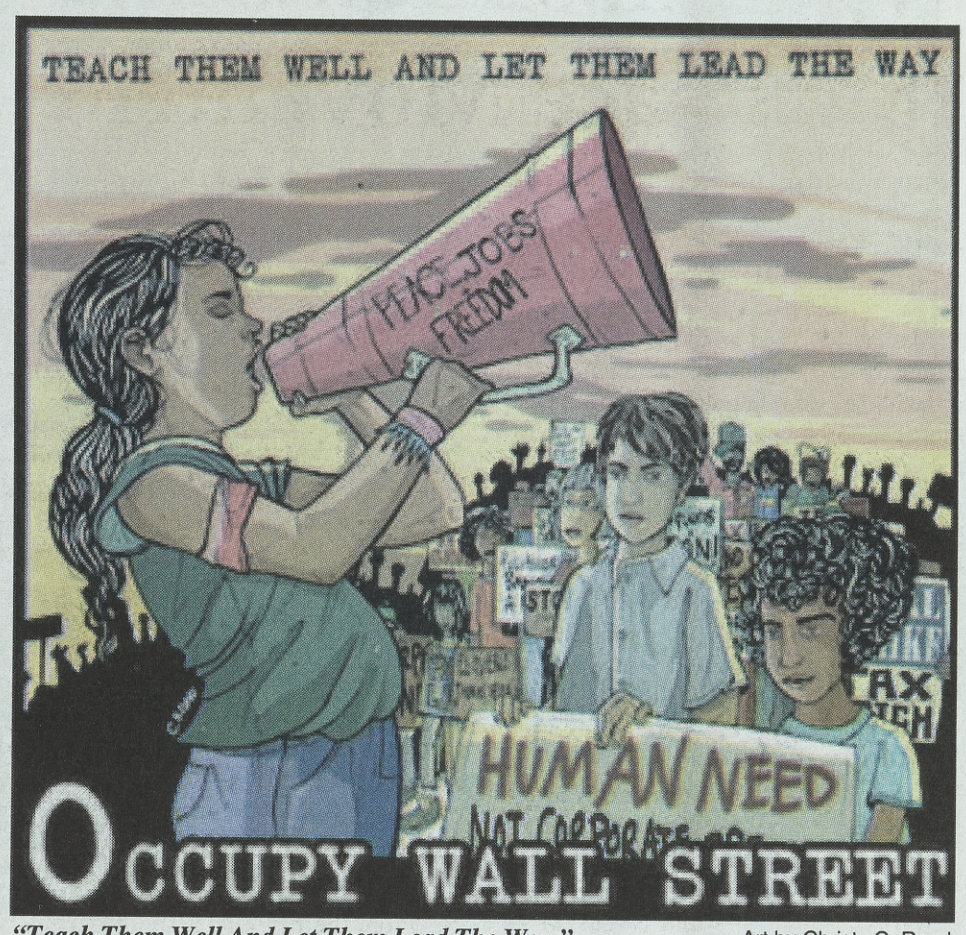
So Chenoweth and Stephan joined together to compare the effectiveness of hundreds of nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns. The two scholars made an odd couple, given their widely divergent belief systems.

Chenoweth said, "Maria was an expert in nonviolent conflicts when we met and I was an expert in armed insurgency and terrorism. So our meeting was somewhat accidental. I was going to be the one to show that nonviolent resistance didn't have a superior record to armed conflict."

Chenoweth had spent four years getting her Ph.D. in terrorism studies and had come to believe that armed insurgency only happens because people found it is the best way to achieve their aims.

Yet, she found that researching hundreds of movements completely challenged what she now calls her "typical, structure-based, politically biased assumptions" about the greater effectiveness of armed struggles. "I did the research and I'm shocked," she said.

"I think there are a lot of assumptions in our field that drive us to conclude that nonviolent resistance is ineffective or that it can't be effective in certain circumstances."



"Teach Them Well And Let Them Lead The Way." Art by Christy C. Road

Perhaps the most extraordinary testimony to the deeply insightful — almost clairvoyant — conclusions of the authors is that they completed their book before the grassroots rebellions of the Arab Spring toppled one dictator after another. That seemed beyond imagining when this book was written, yet the people power movements that arose in the Arab Spring seem to be irrefutable vindication of the authors' analysis of nonviolent insurrections.

Their research had convinced them that nonviolent resistance was "perfectly viable as a strategy for removing authoritarian regimes and achieving self-determination almost anywhere in the world." Nevertheless, they still could not have expected the lightning-fast wave of nonviolent movements that toppled authoritarian regimes in the Middle East in the first months of 2011.

The events of the Arab Spring certainly seem to justify nearly all of the hopes raised by the two women's momentous study of nonviolent movements.

The last sentence in the epilogue of *Why Civil Resistance Works* speaks powerfully of those hopes. They write: "If these last several months have taught us anything, it is that nonviolent resistance can be a near-unstoppable force for change in our world, even in the most unlikely circumstances."

The word *Zeitgeist* is translated as "the spirit of the times." At certain providential moments, it becomes possible to see the spirit of the times flow through the massive movements in Egypt and Tunisia. The same spirit seems to be on the march in the Occupy movements in Oakland, San Francisco and New York City.

The same spirit of the times also seems present in the scrupulous research of two highly original scholars who had the audacity to challenge generations of military analysis and security studies. In doing so, they have given us all the gift of new hope in the power of the people.

Women's Rights and the Peace Movement

from page 4

unique; this oppressive mentality pervaded even the movement itself."

Many women ended up feeling "disillusionment with a movement that fought for other people's freedom while standing upon our backs."

In searching for ways to work for peace while standing up for their own rights and dignity as women, many began looking back at the examples of strong women who had gone before. They learned the stories of legendary women who had overcome powerful systems of oppression to become heroes of the resistance.

Douglass explained how crucial it is to retrieve the history of women who were icons of resistance and liberation. "We are reclaiming our history — remembering all those founding mothers, all those women who kept the movement going without credit for so long, all the contributions we women have made and undervalued."

Feminism at Ground Zero

In "How Feminism Changed the Peace Movement," Caroline Wildflower, an anti-nuclear activist and Catholic Worker, described her painful experiences in well-known peace groups that dehumanized women by relegating them to subservient roles and secretarial chores. Things changed for the better in the mid-1970s, when she got involved in the Pacific Life Community and Ground Zero.

She found a new atmosphere where women's involvement was respected and encouraged. The Pacific Life Community intentionally included feminist principles in its core values, rejected a hierarchical structure and made all decisions by consensus.

"Each person's ideas were considered important — women's and men's," wrote Wildflower, and "feminism was talked about as an integral part of the strategy."

Women became leading speakers and writers in the Pacific Life Community. After she took the remarkable step of going to jail for resisting nuclear weapons while she was pregnant, Wildflower herself became a speaker and writer, writing about her arrest for *Fellowship* magazine.

"Dedicated to Feminism"

Ground Zero was "dedicated to feminism" and to a group process with collective leadership, Wildflower wrote. "Our feminism permeates all aspects of life and makes a difference for everyone."

"Now that we have made these big changes, women are not constantly hurt and put down and devalued in the peace movement. We have successfully created a situation where we live the revolution now, where women and men are respected for their talents and potential."

After nearly 20 years of anti-nuclear organizing in the Pacific Northwest, Jim and Shelley Douglass moved to Alabama. In the spring of 1990, Shelley wrote to the readers of *Ground Zero* newspaper that her path of nonviolence had led to one of the poorest neighborhoods in Birmingham, Alabama, where she was able to fulfill her desire to create a haven for poor families, a Catholic Worker community called Mary's House. She lived there with low-income families deprived of housing and the necessities of life by an economic system that abandoned millions of people to poverty.

She writes about the desperation and hardships faced by her neighbors in a regular column for Pax Christi USA, a prominent peace and justice organization. Jim and Shelley Douglass were recipients of the Pax Christi USA Teacher of Peace Award in 1994, an annual award given to the person who gives outstanding witness to the peace teachings of the church.

In her Pax Christi column, Shelley describes the poverty, racism and deprivation she sees on the streets in Ensley, one of Birmingham's poorest neighborhoods. "Ensley is full of poor and forgotten folks. Our city schools are wretched, our streets are cracking and decaying, we have blocks of boarded-up stores..."

The Ensley area never recovered from the exodus of Birmingham's steel industry years ago, and now is impoverished, deteriorating and abandoned. The people of Ensley are "ignored or written off," she writes, and many people avoid the area as a dangerous, high-crime district. "I have known parents who wouldn't allow their children to come for a work-day at Mary's House, fearing for their safety."

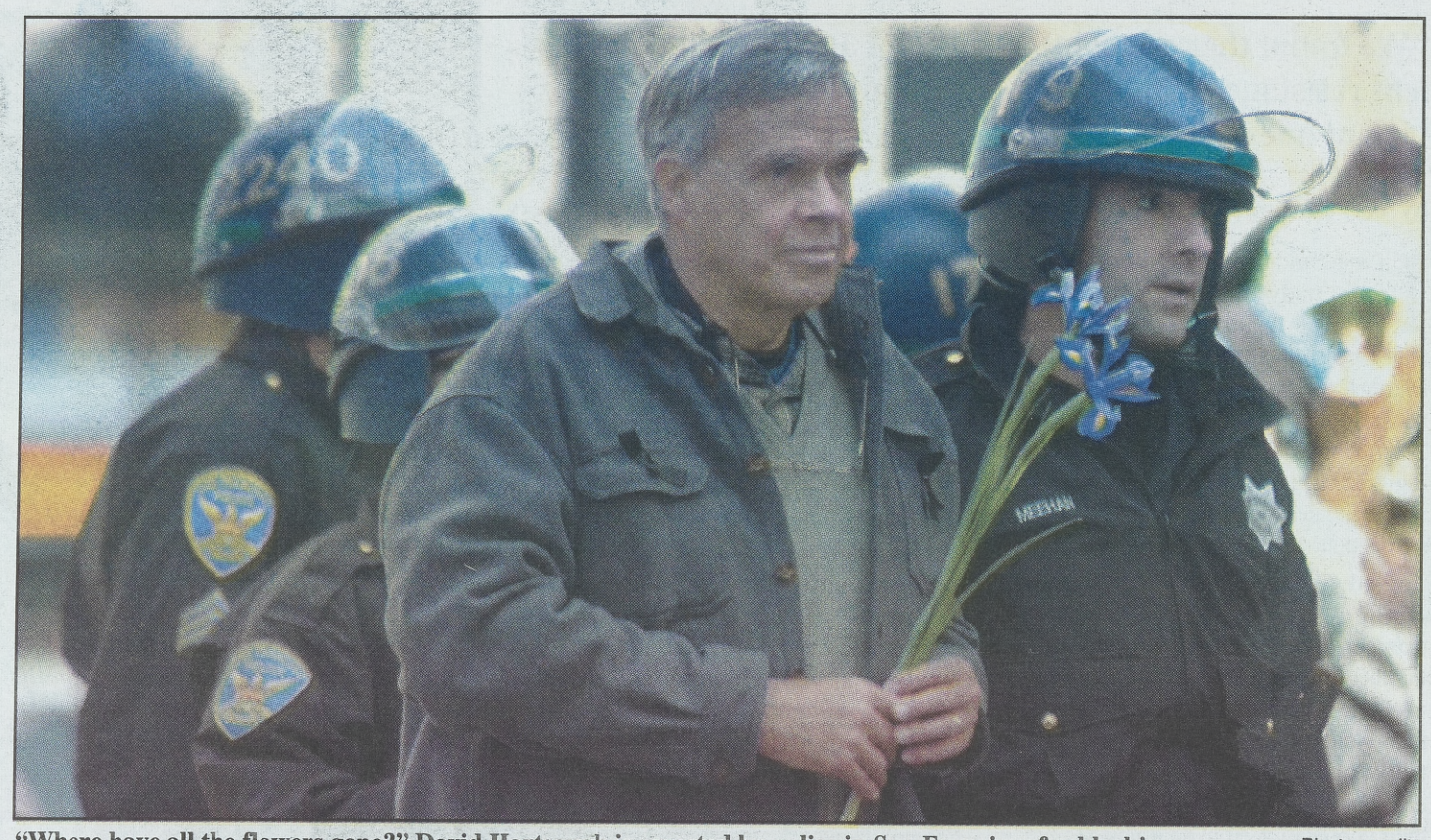
Yet Jim and Shelley Douglass have chosen to live in the poor part of the city for more than 20 years. There are signs of great hope alongside signs of brokenness and despair on the same streets; and it has been an eye-opening experience to see the extent of racism and poverty in present-day Birmingham, a city that experienced some of the worst racial violence in the nation for more than 100 years after the Civil War.

Shelley writes about the staggering extent of injustice and racism that began with slavery and continues to the present.

"In a conspiracy of silence, we ignore the fact that this country, and especially this state, is built on centuries of oppression and exploitation of people with black and brown skin who were kidnapped from their homes and forced to labor as animals to benefit white landowners. We ignore the years of de facto slavery that followed Emancipation; we ignore the structures of racism that continue to define our society, and the way in which people of color and poor people generally are disenfranchised and forced into a shadow caste by voting restrictions and the prison/parole system."

A Quaker's Quest for a World Without War

by Terry Messman



"Where have all the flowers gone?" David Hartsough is arrested by police in San Francisco for blocking Market Street in an act of civil disobedience in resistance to the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Photo credit: Karl Mondon

During a lifetime spent working for peace and justice, David Hartsough has shown an uncanny instinct for being in the right place at the right time. One can almost trace the modern history of nonviolent movements in America by following the trail of his acts of resistance over the past 60 years.

His life has been an unbroken series of sit-ins for civil rights, seagoing blockades of munitions ships sailing for Vietnam, land blockades of trains carrying bombs to El Salvador, arrests at the Diablo nuclear reactor and the Livermore nuclear weapons lab, Occupy movement marches, and international acts of peacemaking in Russia, Nicaragua, Kosovo, Iran and Palestine.

It all began at the very dawn of the Freedom Movement when the teenaged Hartsough met Martin Luther King and Ralph David Abernathy at a church in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1956 as the ministers were organizing the bus boycott at the birth of the civil rights struggle.

Next, while at Howard University, Hartsough was involved in some of the first sit-ins to integrate restaurants in Arlington, Virginia — white-hot confrontations that were violently attacked by white supremacists and the American Nazi Party.

Just as Hartsough was present at Dr. King's first campaign in Alabama, he also was arrested for taking part in the slain civil rights leader's very last campaign, the Poor People's Campaign in 1968.

During the Vietnam War, Hartsough helped organize a seagoing Peace Blockade that gained international attention after activists in small boats sailed directly into the path of the USS Nitro. When seven sailors jumped overboard to join the peace flotilla's resistance to the Vietnam War, it made headlines across the country.

He was standing right next to his friend Brian Willson in September 1987 during a blockade of weapons shipments to Central America, when a munitions train ran over Willson, severing his legs and fracturing his skull. Two months later, Concord police broke Hartsough's arm while violently removing him from the same tracks where he was blocking a train.

Hartsough also was arrested in one of the most momentous anti-nuclear actions in our nation's history, the blockade of the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor. When the anti-nuclear power movement evolved into a movement against nuclear weapons, he was arrested repeatedly at Livermore Lab.

During a massive uprising in Kosovo, he was arrested for conducting nonviolent trainings, and the jailing of U.S. activists created an international uproar.

In all these campaigns and many more, he seemed to be guided as if by the hands of destiny to to be present at some of the most epochal movements for social change.

Quakers in the Oval Office

Perhaps the most striking case of serendipity occurred when Hartsough, at the age of 22, ended up in the Oval Office with a Quaker delegation that urged President John F. Kennedy to take immediate actions for disarmament and world peace. Hartsough also took the same message of peace to the Kremlin as the United States and Soviet Union stood on the very brink of nuclear war.

Quakers have a long history of speaking truth to power. In his book *JFK and the Unspeakable*, peace activist and theologian James Douglass described the significant impact that John F. Kennedy's meeting in the Oval Office with six Quakers on May 1, 1962, had on the president.

Hartsough called himself "the token young guy" on a six-person Quaker delegation that met with President Kennedy to discuss world peace and nuclear disarmament at a time when the threat of nuclear war had reached an historic high point.

The others invited to the Oval Office made up a *Who's Who* of Quaker peace advocates: Ed Snyder and Samuel Levering, executive secretary and chairperson, respectively, of the Friends Committee on National Legislation; Henry Cadbury, a professor at Harvard Divinity School and the chairperson of the American Friends Service Committee; Dorothy Hutchinson, president of the U.S. section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and George Willoughby, who had sailed on the Golden Rule into the nuclear testing area in the Pacific.

In an interview with *Street Spirit*, Hartsough described his meeting with JFK. "Kennedy met with us in his office, sitting in his rocking chair next to the fireplace, and we sat around him, and he listened to us. We told him there was a nuclear submarine that was to be named The William Penn, and that was totally unacceptable."

Penn was a Quaker and a pacifist. Naming a nuclear submarine "The William Penn" is exactly the same as naming a battleship "The USS Gandhi" or a jet bomber "The St. Francis of Assisi."

Hartsough said, "Kennedy just grinned and told us, 'I'll see that it doesn't happen.' " The president was as good as his word, and the nuclear-armed submarine was not named after the Quaker pacifist.

Then, the delegation proceeded to make even more utopian requests on the president. "At that time, in China, there was a drought and many people were dying," Hartsough said. "China was, of course, our arch-enemy then, in addition to Russia. And the United States was spending millions of dollars to store food in grain siloes. So we suggested giving food to China."

Kennedy said, "You mean feeding the enemy?"

The delegation said, "Yes, that's exactly what we mean." The Quaker team reminded the Catholic JFK that unconditional love and feeding the poor went to the heart of the New Testament.

Then, they addressed the terribly urgent concern that had brought them to meet with the president as the world faced the very real possibility of nuclear war. They asked Kennedy to stop nuclear testing and to move the nation away from the growing threat of nuclear disaster.

"I encouraged Kennedy to challenge the Russians to a peace race," Hartsough said. "Instead of having an arms race where one side builds an atomic bomb, so the other side gets an atomic bomb, and then the first side gets a hydrogen bomb. So why not try to go in the other direction, towards disarmament."

Kennedy's thoughtful response placed some of the responsibility back on the shoulders of peace activists. He said the idea of a peace race was a very interesting concept. But he added, "If you guys are serious about us moving in that direction, the military is very strong, so you are going to have to build a powerful movement to help me make that decision."

The president's secretary came in after 25 minutes and said, "Mr. President, your next appointment is here." Kennedy said, "Tell them to wait, I'm learning something from these Quakers."

All six members of the Quaker delegation were highly impressed by Kennedy's listening with an open mind to the radical antiwar values of the delegation, and his evident sincerity in understanding the urgent need to work for world peace.

"I think most important to me was, first, that he listened," Hartsough said. "He wasn't just pontificating as if he was the president and we were lowly peons. And, second, we were speaking truth to power in the White House, and Kennedy wasn't just rejecting it as hogwash."

Kennedy only had 18 more months to live from the time of this meeting to his assassination in November 1963. In that short time, he stopped atmospheric nuclear weapons testing, de-escalated the Cuban missile crisis instead of pushing the button to unleash nuclear weapons on the Soviet Union, took important steps to stop the escalation of a nuclear confrontation in Berlin, and made the decision to bring U.S. advisers out of Vietnam.

Kennedy had run for president as a Cold Warrior, and his growing awareness of the need for peace and disarmament was a hopeful sign.

Hartsough said, "As Jim Douglass, I think, would agree, our meeting may have helped plant some seeds about taking steps for peace later in his presidency. But I think it was the Cuban missile crisis that really scared the daylights out of him and Khrushchev, and helped Kennedy decide to take the courageous steps for peace he did in the latter part of his presidency."

Hartsough spoke out for disarmament on both sides of the Cold War. While a student at Howard University, he studied for a year abroad in East and West Berlin. "At that time," he said, "the United States and the Soviet Union were threatening to blow each other off the map and kill hundreds of millions of people in a nuclear war because we had so dehumanized 'the other.' They were no longer human beings. They were enemies.

"We had psyched ourselves up in our anti-communist crusade. And the Soviet Union had taken a similar stand against the capitalist, imperialist, American warmongers. So Berlin was the one place in the world where I could study both in the Communist world and the Western world, and get a deeper understanding into what both sides were saying."

Again, a fateful sense of timing landed him in Berlin in 1961, the year that the Berlin Wall was built, a time of rising tension and perilous confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Camping in the Soviet Union

He had learned it was permissible to go camping in the Soviet Union, and it only cost two dollars per day for permission to camp. As Hartsough and four other students started off on the road between Berlin and Moscow, "all of a sudden tanks and trucks full of soldiers were headed toward Berlin to help build the Berlin Wall."

He had studied Russia in college and seized the opportunity to "get to know the Russian people — these people we were threatening to bomb off the face of the earth." His group spent about a month on a 6,000-mile trip through Russia and the Ukraine. They camped out and were invited into people's homes for meals. One of their guides spoke fluent Russian, so they had in-depth conversations with people in their homes, churches and farming villages.

Hartsough took two more groups of 18 students into Russia in the next two years. He wrote an AFSC booklet about the trip called *Backyard Russia: Getting to Know the Russian People*. He said, "When you get to know the people as human beings, it's even more difficult to think about bombing their homes and their families."

Yet he was dismayed to find that the Russian people's view of the United States was distorted with the same Cold War propaganda he had heard at home.

"They had the same kind of mentality that Americans had. They had been fed propaganda also, and saw their nuclear bombs as peaceful bombs."

Some questions that the Russian people asked about the United States really struck home. "We were in Russia during the Freedom Rides when buses were burning up and people were being beaten for riding them," Hartsough said. "So they really challenged us, saying, 'You call

See **Quaker's Quest for Peace** *page 12*

Kathy Kelly
A Peacemaker in War Zones

from page 1

die on remote battlefields.

It was a revelation. All around us, in the poorest neighborhoods and the almost forgotten jail cells of our cities, and in the far reaches of the world's refugee camps and war zones, beauty has been put on trial, imprisoned and extinguished.

In response, Kathy Kelly has lived in solidarity with people in war zones, and returned home to launch protests on their behalf in the halls of Congress. Kelly and her friends also organized 70 delegations to deliver medical supplies to civilians in Iraq, in violation of U.S. economic sanctions.

Reclaiming The Radical History Of Nonviolence

Two aspects of Kelly's lifelong experiments with nonviolence are the *passionate commitment* that gives rise to her solidarity with victims of war and poverty, and the *diverse dimensions* of her resistance. Passionate and multidimensional.

The daringly radical and imaginative history of nonviolence has been forgotten to such an extent that our present-day concept of civil disobedience often consists of the staging of a strangely passive and bloodless drama. Activists politely submit to arrest, and then the powers that be carry on business — and warfare — as usual.

Yet, the history of nonviolence is filled with unforgettable images of rebels and agitators who passionately resisted injustice as though their lives were at stake. If we are to build a movement that fights for a better world — a world where beauty is no longer imprisoned — it is imperative to reclaim this legacy of truly radical resistance.

Our heritage of resistance was passed down to us through the breathtakingly brave acts of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, Alice Paul and her sister suffragists staging hunger strikes in jail, and the women of Greenham Common peace camp in their never-say-die protests of U.S. cruise missiles in England.

The roots of resistance run far deeper than symbolic and safely staged protests. The history of dissent includes the housing activists who defied the police and put evicted families back into their homes during the Depression; the anti-nuclear activists who sailed their boats directly into the path of nuclear submarines; the Alabama children and congregations who found the courage to march for freedom and refused to turn back, even when confronted with attack dogs and police clubs.

The peace movement's blueprint for action was drawn up by the Catonsville 9 who burned hundreds of draft records during the Vietnam War and Plowshares activists who hammered nuclear warheads. And our course ahead into a more humane future was navigated by Kathy Kelly and Voices in the Wilderness when they delivered medical supplies to the children of Iraq, in defiance of U.S. economic sanctions.

Kelly's lifelong activism reveals the full, multidimensional spectrum of nonviolence, ranging from war-tax refusal, to planting corn in nuclear missile silos, to protesting drone surveillance, to delivering medical supplies to Iraq, to working with Afghan Peace Volunteers in an effort to help poor people survive economically.

In her experiments with nonviolence, she has tried to *personally* assist the victims of war and poverty. That has often meant living in war zones with people in Iraq and Afghanistan targeted by U.S. bombs.

Even in light of all of her outwardly more dramatic acts of resistance, one of her most meaningful acts of nonviolence was becoming a full-time caregiver for her wheelchair-bound father for several years until his death in 2000. This quiet vigil reminds us that compassion on a personal level is at the very heart of nonviolence.



Kathy Kelly (*top center*) lived with members of the Afghan Peace Volunteers during her frequent stays in Afghanistan.

Even in light of all of her outwardly more dramatic acts of resistance, one of Kathy Kelly's most meaningful acts of nonviolence was becoming a full-time caregiver for her wheelchair-bound father for several years until his death in 2000. This quiet vigil reminds us that compassion on a personal level is at the very heart of nonviolence.

In August 1988, Kelly was arrested and imprisoned for climbing the fence around a nuclear missile silo and planting corn as part of the Missouri Peace Planting to demonstrate how the earth should rightfully be used to serve life. It speaks volumes about her long-lasting commitment to peace that in 2014, fully 25 years after the Missouri Peace Planting, Kelly was the keynote speaker at the anti-nuclear vigil at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory on Good Friday, April 18, 2014.

At the Gates of Livermore

At the gates of the laboratory, she urged on the activists who have kept the Livermore protests alive for over 30 years, asking them to "stop the menacing, horrible message that the nuclear weapons spread all over the world: If you do not subordinate yourselves to serve U.S. national interests, we are prepared to eliminate you, to slaughter you."

In 2003, Kelly was arrested for trespassing at Fort Benning in Georgia at an army training center originally called the School of the Americas. She spent three months in prison for protesting a "school" where the U.S. taught military officials how to utilize torture, assassinations and death-squad massacres of unarmed civilians to prop up right-wing Latin American dictatorships.

Kelly reminded her fellow protesters at Livermore Laboratory that Father Roy Bourgeois had once been jailed after climbing a tree at Fort Benning and using a loudspeaker to broadcast Archbishop Oscar Romero's impassioned plea for the soldiers of El Salvador to lay down their arms and stop slaughtering their own people.

Then Kelly delivered the exact same message to the weapons designers at Livermore who are designing the U.S. arsenal of nuclear warheads. She said, "Invoking the words of Oscar Romero, in the name of God, I order you, I beg you: stop the slaughter, stop the repression!"



Kathy Kelly (*third from left*) and her fellow protesters re-enact the stations of the cross at Livermore Laboratory on Good Friday. Photo by Judith W. Sandoval

Her Good Friday address was indelibly colored by the years she spent in solidarity with people targeted by war in the Middle East. She said, "I've been carrying with me the sense of horror of remembering all the little lives snuffed out in Iraq, those children that we witnessed dying in hospital beds because of economic sanctions against Iraq. They should have been teenagers now. We've lost all of their lives."

Keeping the Faith

There was a sense that she was keeping faith with the children she learned to care about in Afghanistan and Iraq. Keeping faith with the anti-nuclear activists she was arrested with 25 years ago at a missile silo in the American heartland. Keeping faith with Father Roy Bourgeois who was arrested at Fort Benning for keeping faith with Archbishop Romero, assassinated while saying Mass after asking the soldiers to lay down their arms.

Keeping Romero's words alive, Kathy Kelly asked the weapons designers at Livermore to lay down their nuclear arms. Her presentation was, above all, *passionate*, as befits an observance of the Passion Play that is Good Friday. Nonviolence means *passionate resistance* because too many innocent lives have already been lost, and too much blood has been shed.

The Abolition of War

In inviting people to step across the line into civil disobedience at Livermore, Kelly expressed a hope that may sound utopian in the present moment, but may someday turn out to be essential to survival itself.

"We want to abolish war," she said, "and we'll hang onto that claim for dear life. Yes, we want to abolish war. We want to stop the wars!"

Where does one even begin on such a far-off journey as the abolition of warfare? For 40 activists who were arrested at Good Friday with Kelly, only the next step was certain — a single step across a white line.

"So we gather together," Kelly said, "shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm, believing in nonviolence, believing that, yes, we shall overcome. And so we gather together, ready to say that we will not let inconvenience get in the way of acting in accord with the deep, profound desire to end war. Let us step across the line. Let us get arrested today. Let us say together, 'We shall overcome.'"

A Lifelong Commitment to Nuclear Disarmament

Livermore protest on 70th anniversary of Hiroshima bombing

"The killing of civilian noncombatants for political purposes is terrorism and mass murder — nothing else. It should not have happened. It did not need to happen. It should never happen again."

— Daniel Ellsberg



Daniel Ellsberg speaks at Livermore Lab about the "outrageous folly and criminality" of nuclear weapons. Ellen Danchik photo

by Terry Messman

On August 6, 1945, at 8:15 a.m., an entire city was shattered and the world was changed forever when an atomic bomb was dropped on the unsuspecting residents of Hiroshima by a U.S. B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay.

The bomb fell silently from the sky for 43 seconds, then a cataclysmic explosion turned the city of Hiroshima into a raging inferno, blasting buildings into nothingness, and incinerating tens of thousands of children, women and men.

An estimated 80,000 human beings were destroyed instantly in the first heart-stopping moments of the Unforgettable Fire, while countless others died slowly in the months and years to come from terrible burns, injuries and exposure to lethal radioactivity. By the end of 1945, an estimated 140,000 people had died in Hiroshima and at least another 90.000 had died in Nagasaki from the second atomic bomb attack on August 9, 1945.

Countless people were literally vaporized, leaving only shadows on the walls and sidewalks of Hiroshima — ghostly reminders of the lives that had been reduced to atoms by the atomic blast.

On August 6, 2015, more than 300 people gathered at Lawrence Livermore Laboratory on the 70th anniversary of the annihilation of Hiroshima to protest the nuclear weapons designed at the facility that some call a "holocaust laboratory."

Haunting shadows of Hiroshima

Following the rally, protesters marched to the gates of Livermore and blocked the entrance to the weapons laboratory, staging a die-in on the roadway while chalk outlines were drawn around their bodies.

After more than 50 people were arrested and taken away by police for this act of civil disobedience, only the chalk outlines remained, a haunting memorial to the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who were blasted into shadows on the walls of the two Japanese cities turned into rubble by U.S. nuclear weapons.

Chizu Hamada, the organizer of No Nukes Action Committee, formed after the Fukushima meltdown to protest Japanese and U.S. government nuclear policies, described the enormous loss of life and the unparalleled human suffering caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

She urged the gathering to carry on their protests in honor of the spirits of those who died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In an extraordinarily moving appeal, Hamada asked protesters to keep working for nuclear abolition because the fate of the entire world hangs in the balance.

"We must keep on protesting," she said. "We must never give up because the spirits of Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims are here now, and are wishing the abolition of nuclear weapons."

The organizers and speakers at the Hiroshima Day action at Livermore are a living testimony to the lasting dedication that has kept alive the anti-nuclear movement for decades. Daniel Ellsberg and Country Joe McDonald, two of the most prominent voices of the antiwar movement, came to Livermore this year, demonstrating their long commitment to the cause of peace and disarmament.

Ellsberg has been an insightful voice for peace and disarmament for more than 40 years. Since releasing the Pentagon Papers in 1971, he has spoken out tirelessly against warfare and nuclear weapons, and has been arrested more than 100 times for acts of civil disobedience.

Country Joe McDonald wrote and performed one of the greatest antiwar anthems, "I Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag," and composed several other politically outspoken songs, including "Superbird" and "An Untitled Protest."

McDonald went on to record a classic album, "Thinking of Woody Guthrie," featuring his beautiful versions of Guthrie's radical populist anthems. McDonald is one of the very few musicians who has remained personally involved in antiwar activism, veterans rights, and environmental causes for the past 50 years.

Jackie Cabasso, executive director of Western States Legal Foundation, and Marylia Kelley, executive director of Tri-Valley CAREs, have been two of the leading Bay Area organizers for nuclear disarmament for the past three decades.

Cabasso cofounded Western States in 1982 and Kelley launched Tri-Valley CAREs in 1983. Both organizations began at the height of the anti-nuclear movement in California in the early 1980s, but while many other peace groups folded, Cabasso and Kelley have remained constantly dedicated and are now recognized as leading voices in the movement for nuclear disarmament.

Voices of the Hibakusha

Perhaps the most moving expression of devotion to the cause of peace and disarmament has been demonstrated by the hibakusha, Japanese survivors of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who often have suffered lifelong injuries and diseases caused by atomic radiation.

Of all the powerful voices that spoke out for disarmament on the 70th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing, the most poignant moment came when Takashi Tanemori, a survivor of the first atomic blast, appeared at the gates of Livermore Laboratory. He seemed to speak as the voice of conscience for all those who were forever silenced by the atomic attacks that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Takashi Tanemori was only 8 years old when the bomb fell on Hiroshima. The brilliant white flash of the atomic blast was the last thing he ever saw, for on that day, Takashi lost both parents, his two siblings — and his eyesight.

He described that devastating moment in his book, *Hiroshima: Bridge to Forgiveness*. "Without warning! Blinding, burning, shocking white light! I covered my closed eyes. I saw pure white light through my covered eyes....

"In an instant my school and all Hiroshima had evaporated. When I regained consciousness, I awoke in Hell. The three-story wooden frame school had collapsed into a heap of matchsticks. My first floor classroom lay shattered and flattened on the ground. Beneath the heap, I lay buried on my back, unable to move. I couldn't see anything."

Takashi Tanemori would never see anything again for the rest of his life. He spoke out at Livermore this year as a living reminder that the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were sentenced to suffer for the rest of their lives from the terrible aftereffects of the U.S. bombing.

Chizu Hamada said, "Even now, 70 years later, aftereffects remain, such as leukemia, A-bomb cataracts, cancers, birth defects, mental retardation. And the fear of birth defects in children will last many generations."

Hiroshima was 'Mass Murder'

Daniel Ellsberg said, "The killing at Hiroshima was mass murder — terrorism."

"The killing of civilian noncombatants for political purposes is terrorism and mass murder — nothing else. It should not have happened. It did not need to happen. It should never happen again."

Ellsberg was only 14 in 1945 when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, yet he said he felt "very great dismay" and realized even then that a "very ominous thing had happened."

In the 1960s, Ellsberg was a military analyst for the Rand Corporation and a consultant to the Departments of Defense and State, specializing in the command and control of nuclear weapons, and helping carry out a top-secret study of U.S. military operations in the Vietnam War.

After becoming convinced that the United States was pursuing the wrong course, Ellsberg released the Pentagon Papers in 1971 to the *New York Times* and began speaking out against the war.

Nearly everyone remembers Ellsberg as the whistleblower who released the Pentagon Papers, but not as many realize his enormous dedication to the anti-nuclear movement.

Ellsberg was instrumental in the protests at the Rocky Flats plutonium trigger plant in Colorado, and was arrested in the 1970s in acts of civil disobedience there. He went on to be arrested many times in nonviolent protests at Livermore Laboratory, the Concord Naval Weapons Station, the Vandenberg AFB missile test site and the Nevada Test Site.

Ellsberg was arrested at the first major protest held by the Livermore Action Group in February 1982, and was arrested at Livermore again in June 1983 on the International Day of Nuclear Disarmament. Many activists still remember the impassioned seminars on nuclear weapons that Ellsberg gave in jail to several hundred of his fellow prisoners after the June 1983 civil disobedience.

Ellsberg's arrest at Livermore this year came more than 30 years after his first arrests at Livermore Laboratory.

The kind of peace that was bought with the continuous building and modernizing and deploying of nuclear weapons, Ellsberg told the gathering, has "made the possibility of mass murder ever present — and I mean from minute to minute."

The threat of using nuclear weapons is a policy of "outrageous folly and criminality" that could lead to a nuclear war. "And yet these threats go on — and they are threats of ending nearly all life."

The Vital Importance of the Anti-Nuclear Movement

Ellsberg said that the protests of the anti-nuclear movement were of vital importance in stopping the threat of nuclear war. "All over the world today," he said, "there are groups like this. And if it hadn't been for groups like this, we would have had a nuclear war earlier."

He vividly described the moment when the atom bomb was dropped and then asked demonstrators to imagine being one of the unsuspecting residents of Hiroshima during the few seconds after the bomb was released — but before it exploded in a

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mushroom cloud that obliterated the city.

"The bomb is usually described as having exploded at 8:15 a.m.," Ellsberg said. "When I was in Hiroshima, I noticed something odd. In all of the museums and the illustrations and artifacts of the bomb, there were watches that stopped when the bomb exploded, all at the same time. But they were not stopping at 8:15. They were stopping at 8:16."

Ellsberg learned that the bomb was dropped at 8:15 a.m. on the morning of August 6, 1945, but it took 43 seconds to fall from the plane flying at 31,060 feet. It was released on a parachute to give the plane time to get away. So even as the bomb fell on the unsuspecting city below, people went about their daily business for nearly one more minute.

One more minute of life...

Ellsberg asked people to close their eyes and imagine themselves to be Japanese residents of Hiroshima that morning, still in bed, or at the breakfast table with their family, or walking to work or attending school, just as survivors have described doing in that last minute.

"At 8:15, all of these people were doomed," Ellsberg said. "But they had 43 seconds in which to live on earth with other people. Try that. Be there. The bomb has dropped. Close your eyes and imagine yourselves living in Hiroshima."

At the gates of Livermore, hundreds of people were silent for 43 seconds — the entire span of life left for tens of thousands of defenseless civilians in Hiroshima as the bomb silently fell.

At the end of 43 seconds, Ellsberg said, "Time for a baby to be conceived or even born. Time to look at flowers. Time to say goodbye to your child as he leaves for school. An amazing amount of time.

"Every minute of that is precious. That's what we're threatening and we shouldn't be. Every minute of that, let alone several years, is precious."

Ellsberg then invited people to join him in committing civil disobedience by blocking the gates at Livermore. "It's never really a good day to die," he said. "But this is a good day to get arrested."

'DON'T DROP THE H-BOMB ON ME'

Country Joe McDonald animated the gathering by performing a mini-concert of antiwar anthems and anti-Bomb ballads, delivered in his unique blend of countercultural radicalism and the satiric surrealism that provided a soundtrack for the anti-Vietnam War movement.

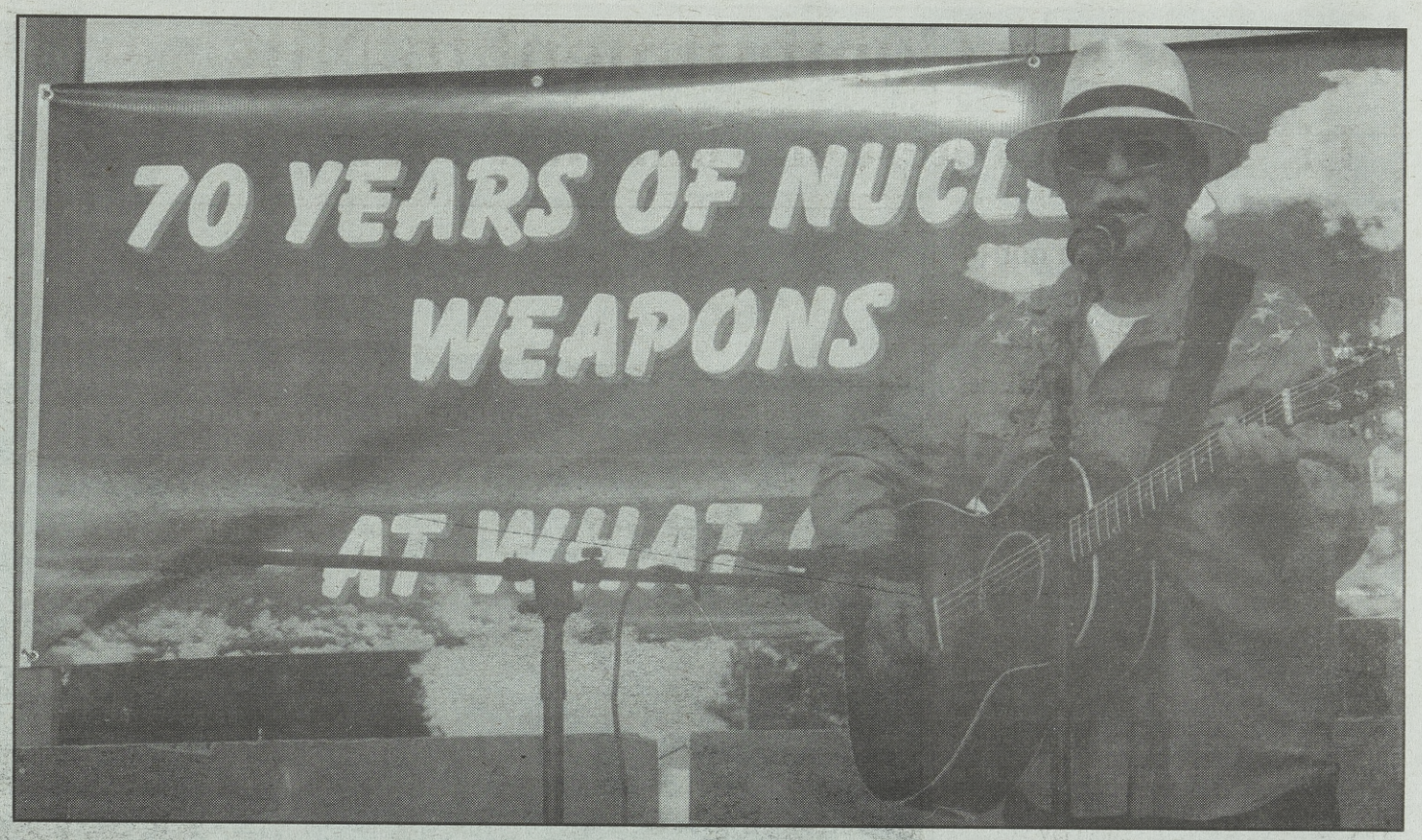
Back in 1967, Country Joe and the Fish recorded a plaintive song, "Thought Dream," that unexpectedly mutated into a refrain that could have been a sardonic slogan of the anti-nuclear movement: "Please don't drop that H-Bomb on me!"

At the gates of Livermore Laboratory, Country Joe kept alive that classic combination of sarcastic wit and antiwar outrage by performing a black-humor ballad about World War III called "Camouflage."

"I've got a camouflage house
and a camouflage car
a camouflage pool in my backyard.
And I ain't afraid of World War III
cuz if they drop the Bomb
I'll just melt into the scenery."

The song lampoons the paranoia of the nuclear age by depicting a survivalist who is ready to hide from the holocaust in his camouflage gear. It includes a truly chilling double entendre: "If they drop the Bomb, I'll just melt into the scenery."

That disquieting image calls to mind the residents of Hiroshima who literally melted into the scenery — melted and vaporized into shadows on the wall.



Country Joe McDonald performed a mini-concert of anti-war anthems at the Livermore demonstration. Ellen Danchik photo

Next, McDonald sang one of the most effective anti-war anthems of all, a great derisive blast against the masters of war who would march people lockstep into battlegrounds and graveyards.

"And it's one, two, three,
What are we fighting for?
Don't ask me, I don't give a damn,
Next stop is Vietnam.
And it's five, six, seven,
Open up the pearly gates.
Well there ain't no time to wonder why,
Whoopee! We're all gonna die."

McDonald's timeless song of dissent exposes the duplicity of military leaders who indoctrinate the brainwashed masses to fight and die and never wonder why.

Both these songs are hilarious send-ups of the absurdity of war, but there is another, very different dimension of McDonald's political songwriting. He wrote "An Untitled Protest," a quietly powerful lament that depicts the full tragedy of war for its youngest victims.

"An Untitled Protest" is a haunting elegy for the countless children who have fallen victim to U.S. bombing raids on their homeland — raids by "silver birds" that blindly drop anti-personnel weapons on "shores they've never seen."

"Red and swollen tears
tumble from her eyes,
While cold silver birds
who came to cruise the skies
Send death down to bend
and twist her tiny hands
And then proceed to Target B
in keeping with their plans."

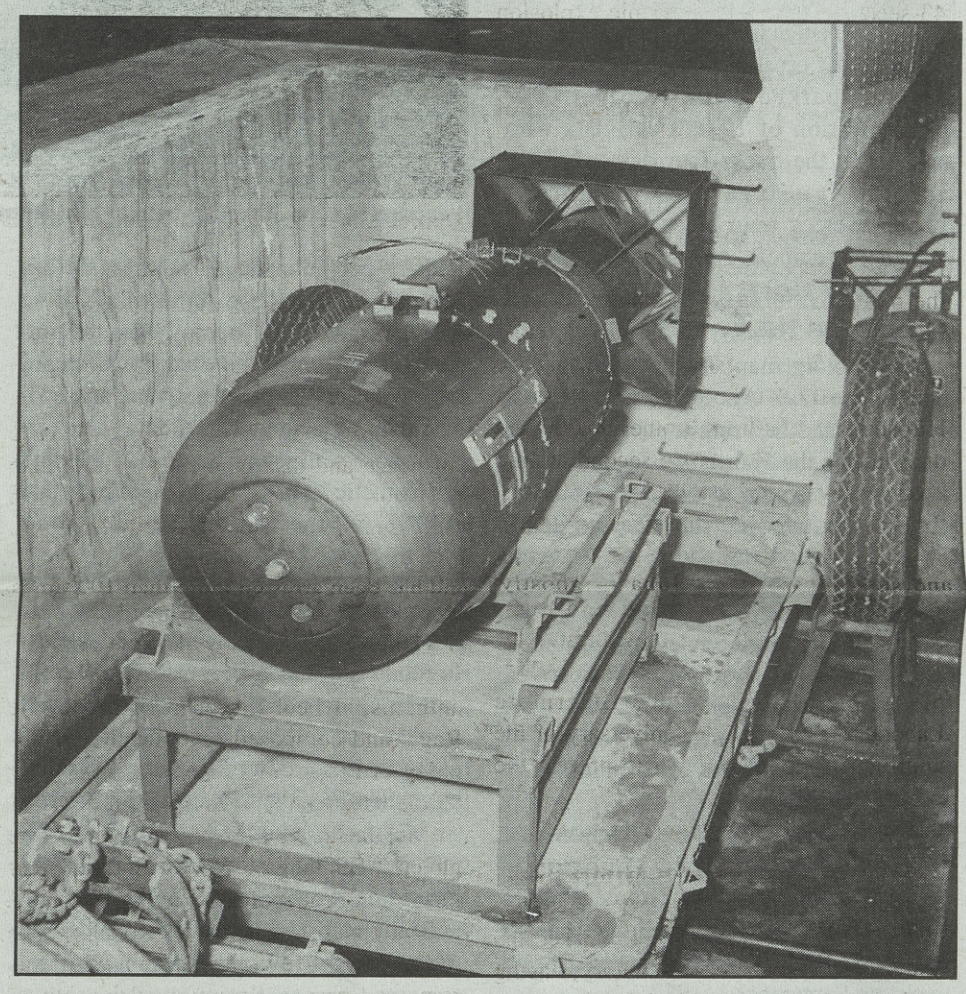
In a voice both mournful and quietly outraged, McDonald portrays the destruction unleashed by "the death machine" and piloted by khaki soldiers who "ride a stone leviathan across a sea of blood."

TRI-VALLEY CARES

Marylia Kelley, director of Tri-Valley CAREs, has been a leading organizer of countless Livermore protests over the years. When Livermore Action Group disbanded in 1986, only the most dedicated activists remained to keep the anti-nuclear work alive, people like Marylia Kelley, Jackie Cabasso and Carolyn Scarr of the Ecumenical Peace Institute.

Kelley reported that Livermore Laboratory is currently involved in modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal and designing new long-range nuclear warheads. Many people would like to believe that the arms race is winding down, and Livermore Lab's public relations department often claims that lab technicians are now focused on projects such as energy efficiency and nuclear energy research.

Yet, Tri-Valley CAREs reports that the overwhelming majority of the lab's budget is spent on nuclear weapons. More than 85 percent of Livermore's funding is designated for nuclear weapons — adding up to one billion dollars spent on nuclear weapons activities in fiscal year 2016.



Little Boy, the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima by the Enola Gay. The annihilation of Hiroshima by a single atomic bomb changed the nature of war forever.

In a nation that already has 16,000 nuclear weapons, Kelley explained how Livermore Lab technicians are still spending one billion dollars this year alone to design new nuclear weapons technology.

"A new Long-Range Stand Off nuclear warhead design and the start of plutonium shots in the lab's National Ignition Facility reveal two facets of this new arms race," Kelley said. "In contrast to the Cold War, which was largely about sheer numbers, the new arms race and its dangers stem from novel military capabilities now being placed into nuclear weapons."

A CALL TO ACTION

Jackie Cabasso, executive director of the Western States Legal Foundation, offered a stirring call to action for people committing civil disobedience at Livermore. She quoted the profound warning given to the UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1982 by then-Mayor of Hiroshima, Takeshi Araki.

Hiroshima's mayor told the United Nations: "Hiroshima is not merely a witness of history. Hiroshima is an endless warning to the future of humankind. If Hiroshima is ever forgotten, it is evident that the mistake will be repeated and bring human history to an end."

In actuality, the mistake of Hiroshima was repeated, and only three days later, at Nagasaki, obliterated on August 9, 1945.

Cabasso quoted the passionate outcry of Nagasaki Mayor Hitoshi Motoshima: "Nagasaki has to be forever the last city in the world bombed by nuclear weapons."

"That is why we're here," Cabasso said — to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again."

When people march to the west gate of Livermore Lab, she explained, sirens will sound in remembrance of the second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.

"The sirens will signal a die-in. The chalk outlines that we'll leave behind today are solemn reminders of the shadows of human beings vaporized by atomic bombs 70 years ago that still haunt the walls and sidewalks of Hiroshima and Nagasaki."

Cabasso called on the U.S. government to "lead a process with a timetable to achieve the universal elimination of nuclear weapons."

As demonstrators applauded her call for the elimination of nuclear weapons, Cabasso said, "Let us demand: No more Hiroshimas! No more Nagasakis! No more Fukushimas! No more wars!"

Blood on the Tracks

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It seemed clear that Willson was not only dancing in celebration of his own survival and recovery, but in celebration of life itself — and especially, the lives of defenseless people in impoverished countries threatened by the weapons he once risked his life to stop. After a few moments, every peace activist who had come to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Nuremberg Actions began dancing with Willson.

They danced while songwriter Mark Levy sang an anti-war anthem he wrote to honor Willson's stand for peace, and joined Levy in singing the chorus:

"You can't move that train,
you can't move that train
without moving my body."

Yet, 25 years ago, the train did move Willson's body. Moved it, maimed it, and crushed it. And that horrific assault seemingly also crushed the hopes of the handful of peace activists and anti-war military veterans who had gathered on the tracks at Concord to begin a fast against the U.S.-sponsored wars in Central America.

Instead of crushing the movement, the tragedy sparked a massive anti-war demonstration of 10,000 activists who gathered at the tracks four days after the collision. It also gave rise to years of round-the-clock train blockades by members of Nuremberg Actions who carried on Willson's vigil as a sacred calling.



Brian Willson sits on the railroad tracks at the exact place where the train ran over him at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. Directly behind him stands David Hartsough (white cap) and Daniel Ellsberg (in sunglasses). Photo by Ariel Messman-Rucker

Born on the Fourth of July

As a young man, Brian Willson had entered the U.S. Air Force as a second lieutenant, and befitting a patriotic young man born on the Fourth of July, he proudly went to Vietnam to serve his country. But, after witnessing the massive death toll unleashed on the people of Vietnam by the U.S. military, Willson became a convert to the peace movement.

With increasing conviction, he joined other veterans-turned-peacemakers in resisting his own nation's nuclear weapons and opposing President Reagan's support of death squads, torture and mass murder in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Invoking the Nuremberg principles that call on citizens to disobey their nation when it commits war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace, Willson sat on the Concord train tracks on September 1, 1987.

A munitions train appeared to deliberately pick up speed and momentum as it bore down on the defenseless protester who was clearly visible to the observers sitting on the front of the train.

In the next moment, a sickening collision ended in blood on the tracks. Horrified screams burst out from several people who saw Brian Willson's body being crushed by the train. One leg was torn completely off at the knee, and the other was crushed and would soon have to be amputated. His whole body was mangled and tossed under the train like a lifeless doll. Those who rushed to comfort him saw that a piece of Brian's skull had been torn off so that his head was bleeding and part of his brain was visible.

Labeled a 'domestic terrorist'

Now, 30 years after that moment of terror on the tracks, many things have changed. The Concord Naval Weapons Station has been renamed the Military Ocean Terminal Concord, a name-change that has done nothing to dispel its mission of shipping the weapons of mass death to other countries.

In the past 30 years, Willson has endured a prolonged and painful period of recovery. Somehow, he found the strength and courage to outlive his near-crucifixion on the Concord train tracks. He has been honored as a hero by many in his own country and celebrated by tens of thousands of people in Latin America. He has authored a moving book entitled *Blood on the Tracks* about his journey from the jungles of Vietnam to the tracks at Concord and onward to the peace activism and ecological living he practices today.

He now walks with grace and strength on prosthetic limbs — thin metal rods that look, for all the world, like the legs of some metallic skeleton.

In the intervening years, Willson also learned some disquieting facts about the background of his nearly fatal "accident." He found out that, a year before the collision in Concord, his nonviolent peace activism had resulted in his being labeled by the FBI as a domestic terrorist suspect under then-President Reagan's anti-terrorism task force. And he discovered that the train crew at Concord that day had been advised not to stop the train that dismembered his body and fractured his skull.

Celebrating Nuremberg Actions

On Sept. 1, 2012, Willson joined other members of Nuremberg Actions for the 25th anniversary of the day when he took his brave stand for peace on the tracks. The peace group was formed to uphold the Nuremberg principles established by the United Nations after World War II.

Beginning on October 18, 1945, the U.S. government and Allied forces put Nazi leaders on trial for war crimes in Nuremberg, Germany, the symbolic birthplace of the Nazi Party. Nazi Germany's political, military and economic leaders were tried, and many were executed, for war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace.

The Nuremberg principles confirmed the primary importance of the individual conscience even in times of war by establishing the principle that no one — whether the highest military officer or the lowliest private or civilian — could justify war crimes by saying they were only following superior orders.

Flash forward 32 years from the Nuremberg war crime trials of 1945, and American peace activists in 1987 were charging the U.S. government with committing war crimes of its own, including the shipment of devastating anti-personnel weapons, 500-pound bombs, white phosphorus and nuclear warheads. Since these weapons indiscriminately massacred civilian noncombatants, experts in international law and the Nuremberg principles warned that their use constituted war crimes and crimes against humanity.

These weapons were shipped into the Concord Naval Weapons Station by train and truck and then shipped out to prop up dictatorial Central American regimes that used U.S. weapons and U.S. military advisers to massacre civilian populations in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras — killing women, children and peasant farmers indiscriminately.

A bittersweet remembrance

The bittersweet 25th anniversary of Nuremberg Actions was held on a beautiful, sunny day near the tracks that had transported the weapons of genocide to Central America. Introducing the event was David Hartsough, a friend of Willson who was sitting right at Brian's side when the train roared down on the nonviolent vigilers. In the aftermath of that moment of tragedy and heartbreak, Hartsough and many other activists dedicated years of their lives to nonviolent peace vigils and blockades with Nuremberg Actions.

It now seems almost impossible to believe, but Nuremberg Actions maintained a round-the-clock vigil on the tracks every day of the year after Willson's sacrifice, and blocked every munitions train and truck that came into Concord for the next two-plus years.

As we gathered on the 25th anniversary to commemorate Brian Willson's sacrifice, and to honor the dedication of all the activists who were arrested for stopping trains and trucks going into the Concord port, the memory of those days was a shining inspiration in the minds of everyone in attendance.

The deeply felt emotions of those days of round-the-clock peace blockades were clearly evident in Hartsough's voice as he described the formation of Nuremberg Actions. He said, "Twenty-five years ago today we came together as a part of Nuremberg Actions to stop the death trains and the death trucks that were coming along these tracks and these roads.

"We estimate that millions, *millions* of human beings were killed as a result of bombs that came along these tracks and these roads. We felt we had a responsibility to God, but also to international law, the Nuremberg principles, that we could not stand idly by while death was going from our neighborhoods to people's homes and communities in Central America."

Veterans fast for peace

The vigil on the tracks had begun with a 40-day fast started by, among others, Brian Willson, Duncan Murphy and David Duncombe. All three men were military veterans who had since dedicated their entire lives to working for peace.

Hartsough said, "They announced to the Navy that they'd be fasting and that they'd be blocking the trains and trucks — and the Navy had the choice of stopping that shipment of death trains and trucks, or arresting us, or running over us. We never imagined they would actually run over us."

When the train came roaring down on the peaceful protesters at 11:57 a.m. on September 1, 1987, Hartsough was sitting on the tracks next to Willson and he saw, heard and felt the terrible impact of the collision. Photos taken in the moments after Willson was struck down show Hartsough holding his hands over the gaping hole in Willson's skull, helplessly trying to stop the bleeding and protect the exposed brain of his friend.

The most astonishing part of the whole story is what happened after Willson was run down. The "boomerang effect" is well known in nonviolent movements, when the powers-that-be unleash the forces of repression and brutality on nonviolent, seemingly powerless protesters, only to have their most violent efforts backfire on them and create a broader resistance. Not only do these government-ordered acts of violent suppression fail to end the protests, they often help build a stronger movement.

Hartsough said, "Instead of stopping Nuremberg Actions by running the train over us, 10,000 people came out the next weekend — including many of you who are here today, I'm sure — and Nuremberg Actions continued blocking every train and truck for 28 months."

The boomerang effect

Ellen Danchik, the legal coordinator of Nuremberg Actions during this period (and, in full disclosure, my marriage partner), witnessed this boomerang effect.

Danchik said, "Brian's stand at the tracks was an act of redemptive suffering. His blood was spilled on the tracks as he exposed the truth to the world, that the Concord Naval Weapons Station was sending weapons to El Salvador to kill innocent men, women and children.

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"The Navy tried to silence him, but instead, his suffering and the spilling of his blood exposed their dirty little secret to the entire world. The U.S. Navy tried to stop his voice and attempted to silence him forever. Their plan backfired and four days after Brian was nearly killed, 10,000 people came to the Concord Naval Weapons Station, outraged at what had happened."

Danchik said that Willson had seen at first-hand the terrible suffering caused by his own government in Vietnam, and was determined to never let the massacre of innocent civilians happen again.

"Brian's blood was poured on the tracks in self-sacrifice to save others," Danchik said. "The love that he showed on that day was the same love that the martyrs before him had shown — Martin Luther King, the four young girls in Birmingham, Gandhi and the Kennedys."

In the years that followed, Hartsough was arrested many times at the tracks, and had his arm broken by a police officer who used a pain-hold in arresting him. He and other Nuremberg activists later won a lawsuit and a court order prohibiting these torturous pain-holds from being used at Concord against nonviolent protesters.

At the anniversary rally, he said, "All of us together have played an important role in saying no to this export of death and destruction and war all over the world."

Hartsough then introduced Brian Willson to the anniversary gathering, and we listened spellbound as the Vietnam veteran described his feelings about that fateful day on September 1, 1987.

A Sacred Spot

"It's a thrill to be here, because you are all here," Willson told the rally. "It's like a celebration of a sacred spot and a sacred moment and a sacred campaign. I'm very grateful for the five people who huddled over my body after the Navy ambulance came and left and wouldn't help, delaying my going to the hospital for 17 minutes.

"It was those five people who kept my blood and my spirit alive with my brain wide open from the fractured skull and all my legs gone. It's pretty amazing that I'm alive and I'm thankful for those people that were with me. I was thankful for waking up in the hospital. I woke up on Saturday, September 5, and was told there were 9,000 or 10,000 people at the tracks."

The fires of dissent still burn visibly in Willson. He described the need for all citizens to resist the military leaders who plague the world with warfare, and begin non-cooperating with the corporate polluters who wage war on the earth.

Willson said, "I wake up every day knowing I live in a country that is bombing multiple peoples and multiple countries. That's incredible for me. I witnessed the bombing in Vietnam. That's what changed me so deeply — seeing the aftermath of the villages we bombed. I still hear the moaning of the people that weren't immediately killed in those villages.

"So when I know we are bombing, I kind of viscerally experience this incredible, diabolical imposition of suffering on other people. So that's why I've been thrilled about the Occupy movement. I've been thrilled about notions of an uprising in this country, an uprising that says we are not going to cooperate anymore, we are going to be in non-cooperation as we build a new society from below — not from above, but from below."

Bob Lassalle-Klein, a professor of religious studies at Holy Names University in Oakland, was present at the Concord tracks on Sept. 1, 1987. He addressed part of his remarks to Brian's son, Gabriel, who as a very young boy, witnessed the full horror of his stepfather being mangled under the train wheels.



Shocked and stunned, his friends try to help Brian Willson just after he was run over by a munitions train at the Concord base.

'You killed my father'

A radio reporter had taped the entire tragedy, and recorded the horrified voice of young Gabriel telling the naval station's personnel: "You murderers! You killed my father! You killed my father!"

Speaking to the now-grown Gabriel at the 25th anniversary, Lassalle said, "I will never forget Brian's foot completely detached with the bone sticking out of it, sitting there on the track.

"Most of all I want to say, Gabriel, how deeply moved I am that you are here today, because I will never forget you running away from Brian's body screaming, 'They just killed my father.' The pain you felt that day has to mark your life. I want to say, though, that the willingness to accept that pain ... has touched many people around the world."

Lassalle described how the story of Willson's suffering for the cause of peace has inspired people thousands of miles away. Two years ago, Lassalle traveled to Argentina with other faith-based activists. In discussing the redemptive power of peacemaking, he described Willson's self-sacrifice to people in Argentina who had never before heard about it.

Lassalle said, "I showed them the clip of Brian being run over by the train. I was so moved by the reaction of the crowd there because they had never heard the story and they couldn't believe that someone from the United States would do something like this. And the depth of response I received to the story of what had happened showed me again that pain has a power of its own, particularly when it's pain taken on for love."

Ken Butigan, the director of Pace e Bene, a peacemaking organization initiated by the Franciscans, said that witnessing Willson being maimed by the weapons train transformed his life. "My life divides into those two parts — everything before September 1, 1987, and everything afterwards," he said. "I was about five feet away and to see my friend rolling under that train over and over like a rag doll is etched fully in my consciousness."

Butigan said that Freedom of Information requests filed by peace activists had unearthed documents showing that the Concord weapons station was shipping out "thousands of 500-pound bombs and white-phosphorus canisters and fuse extenders, which could be swiveled into the top of those bombs so they explode two feet above the ground and become anti-personnel weapons."

Only one year before Willson sat on the tracks, Butigan said, Congress and the public were virtually unaware of the deadly role of the Concord Naval Weapons Station in shipping weapons of mass murder. All that was changed at the moment Willson's blood was spilled on the tracks.

"I knew that our larger society didn't know much about this place and the death it was wielding," Butigan said. "One year later, after Brian was run down and miraculously survived and came to Washington, D.C., he appeared in a hearing on Capitol Hill with all these members of Congress and now we had a series of admirals pointing at a map where the Concord Naval Weapons Station was."

Daniel Ellsberg's reflections

Daniel Ellsberg, a lifelong peace activist who released the Pentagon Papers, told the gathering how powerfully he had been affected when he learned of Willson's being run down by the train.

Ellsberg and his wife Patricia came to the Concord tracks on Sept. 2, 1987, the day after Willson was maimed, intending to block the next train. "So we came out and sat right in the place where Brian had been and his blood was still on the tracks — rusty-colored blood on the tracks. They chose not to bring a train through that day. They backed off on that one."

Willson's sacrifice raised the question in Ellsberg's mind of "what is it worth risking and doing to oppose the kind of evil and violence and destruction that we're facing and, as Brian said, that is still going on now." He had long pondered over a "profound" insight Willson had uttered about the humanity of people in other countries threatened by the U.S. war machine.

According to Ellsberg, "Brian said a phrase that, as this train goes by, it will carry munitions that will kill children and other people in Nicaragua. *Their lives are not worth less than mine, mine is not worth less than theirs*. Now I have never read anything like that, I have never heard anything like that said before."

Ellsberg described Brian's sacrifice as a sign of hope for a human race that desperately needs to learn to overcome its tragic history of warfare and extermination.

"Brian is calling us prophetically to a possibility within our human selves of not being a participant in, not being complicit, not tolerating, not being silent about the extermination and massacre of any other humans. That would be just a profound change. So Brian's example gives us a picture of what human life can be."

'I walk on Third World legs'

Standing under the green, glowing leaves of trees swaying beneath the bright blue sky, Ellsberg reminded the gathering that the beauty of nature and trees, the presence of loved ones and friends, and our shared commitment to the ideals of peacemaking help make life worth living. In the same breath, he spoke of the beauty of Willson's great sacrifice.

Ellsberg said, "We come back finally to the fact that this is what makes life worth living — people who are ready to sacrifice themselves for other people, nonviolently and truthfully, and to do what they can. Brian's legs were worth losing. He didn't choose it, but was it too much? No. What he was looking at was that those trains would take off the legs of children and others in the Third World. And he said, 'I walk on Third World legs now.' That made him a symbol that can help change things."

As the rally concluded, the entire group marched to the exact spot where Willson was run over by the train. Everyone formed a circle around Brian as he used his cane to point out the spot where he had been hit.

Willson said of his recovery from the near-fatal maiming and his use of prosthetic limbs: "You go with what you've got and celebrate it." A well-known prosthetic specialist has created prosthetics for him completely free of charge. Willson removed his prosthetic limbs to show everyone what his legs look like now.

At the end of the event, everyone held hands in a circle around Willson and sang in celebration. Hartsough said, "Brian had not been killed at all by this train and held a determination that we've got to continue this struggle and a commitment to nonviolence — a belief that nonviolence can really overcome this tragic death place at Concord Naval Weapons Station."

He then offered a powerful blessing for Brian Willson's sacrifice and the beauty of the movement that it inspired.

Hartsough said, "Those were the most beautiful and powerful moments of my life. We had transformed this horror into something which I think is historic. I don't know if there is any other place on the planet where people would actually put their bodies on the line day after day after day, night after night after night, just to stop this madness. So I hate what this Navy base did to Brian and attempted to do to our vigil, but I really do feel that we shall overcome."

Thanks to Ariel Messman-Rucker for contributing greatly to this article.

YSA's Campaign to Save Our Street Spirit

by Sally Hindman

After 22 years as a publication of the American Friends Service Committee, Youth Spirit Artworks is overjoyed and honored that the *Street Spirit* newspaper has now become a project of our organization, with hands-on involvement of Youth Spirit's young leaders.

In our new collaboration, YSA Leaders will create articles, poetry and art for *Street Spirit,* publicize their art, activate readers to participate in our community organizing campaigns, publicize our youth-led activities and events, participate on the *Street Spirit* Advisory Board, and sell the newspaper as part of their Art Sales Enterprise.

Over the next three years, our plan is to build a base of long-term donors, including individuals, families and businesses that will sustain the newspaper so we can continue the amazing mission of *Street Spirit* to report "Homeless Blues & Justice News" in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Street Spirit has a distribution of 20,000 papers per month and sustains 100 street vendors with an income, enabling them to maintain stability in their lives.

If you love and appreciate *Street Spirit,* we hope you will give to our critically important new "Save Our Street Spirit" Fundraising Campaign, in which all gifts made by credit card via Paypal or Network for Good at www.youthspiritartworks.org will be matched dollar-for-dollar by a major donor in 2017. Checks can also be sent to: Youth Spirit Artworks—Street Spirit Newspaper, 1740 Alcatraz Ave, Berkeley, CA, 94703.



***"The Displacement of Beauty & The Migration of Gentrification."* A new mural on the theme of gentrification and justice, designed by the artists of Youth Spirit Artworks.**

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Street Spirit

Street Spirit is a publication of Youth Spirit Artworks.

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Street Spirit welcomes submissions of articles, artwork, poems and photos.

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A Quaker's Quest for Peace

from page 6

yourselves a democracy, but why is your country doing this stuff?'"

A month after his meeting with Kennedy, Hartsough was arrested for holding a prayer vigil in front of the White House calling for an end to nuclear weapons testing. His sign said, "Bomb Tests Kill People," and he was jailed in Washington, D.C.

Later that summer, he was in Russia, and realized nobody was going to challenge the Russian bomb tests. So Hartsough and a fellow student carried the exact same message to Red Square, holding a sign saying, in Russian, "Bomb Tests Kill People."

They stood in a silent vigil holding the sign right next to the Kremlin and the Lenin mausoleum. People would come up and say, "Why are you against our peaceful bombs?" And, "Go back to the United States and demonstrate there."

Hartsough answered, "We did demonstrate in the United States, and they told us to go demonstrate in Russia!"

Soviet police came and told them it was illegal to demonstrate against their "peaceful bombs" and they could get 20 years in prison. "We told the police we had been arrested a month ago in front of the White House for offering the same message."

The police left, saying they had to talk with their superiors about what to do. They were not arrested, but Russian officials decided not to let Hartsough back in Russia for 26 years. "For 26 years, I was persona non grata — until Gorbachev," he said.

David's father, Ray Hartsough, was a congregational minister who had refused to become a chaplain or be involved in the U.S. military. Ray Hartsough went to Gaza with the AFSC and the United Nations in 1949, and spent nine months going through the battle lines and bringing food, medicine and tents to refugees.

This made a deep impression on David at age 8. "He was willing to put his own life on the line for people he had never met," he said of his father.

Hartsough's father became a Quaker and began working with the AFSC, and David got to know the "amazing people" his father brought to their home — civil rights activists Ralph David Abernathy and Bayard Rustin, and Quaker activists Steve Cary and Clarence Pickett.

David became a Quaker himself at age 13. He has been a Quaker his entire adult life. His wife, Jan Hartsough, a dedicated activist on food and hunger issues, is also a Quaker. Both David and Jan are peace and justice activists who worked with the AFSC for nearly two decades.

He explained that Quakers try to speak out for justice and peace in the world, both as individuals and through the organizations they have created: the Friends Committee for National Legislation, the American Friends Service Committee and the Religious Society of Friends.

"Quakers believe that all people are created by God," he said. "We're all children of God, so we are brothers and sisters. So we have a responsibility to one another if someone is hungry or in prison or in a war zone. Quakers try to live by their values and beliefs: love and compassion and caring for one another, and for the planet and the environment."

It is a central article of faith to seek justice for homeless and hungry people, and for prisoners and refugees. And it is crucial to alleviate the suffering caused by warfare. "The causes of war are nationalism and greed and imperialism and we have a responsibility to address those causes of war," Hartsough said.

JOHNNY APPLESEED

David Hartsough's life path may be likened to the legend of Johnny Appleseed. He has planted many seeds, and helped catalyze many social justice movements, and then he wanders on to plant more seeds of peace.

As the director of AFSC's Nonviolent Movement Building Program for nearly two decades, David worked to help form the Pledge of Resistance and Nuremberg Actions to oppose U.S. military intervention in Central America. He did the nonviolence trainings to prepare Witness for Peace teams on peacemaking missions to Nicaragua, and spent several months in Nicaragua with their volunteers.

He helped form the Peace Navy that joined longshoremen in blocking the unloading of South African cargo ships in the anti-apartheid movement. He conducted nonviolence trainings for the Abalone Alliance, and he worked with Native Americans in the Four Corners area of the Southwest and at DQ University when it was threatened with closure.

Another seed Hartsough planted was the AFSC's Homeless Organizing Project, a program that organized many years of housing takeovers and civil disobedience, and created *Street Spirit* in 1995. He was my first supervisor at AFSC.

Hartsough helped to launch the homeless program, he explained, to "challenge our society's inhumanity and neglect of homeless people, challenging the governments that criminalized homeless people."

THE QUIXOTIC QUAKER

Hartsough was only 14 when he organized his first nonviolent protest at a Nike missile plant. Now, 60 years later, he remains as actively involved as ever. Many people begin their lives as idealists or radicals, but as the years pass by, they become more moderate, more "reasonable," often even more conservative.

David Hartsough remains, more than ever, the utopian believer in global peace and economic justice for all. His latest campaign is called A World Beyond War, and it is the most quixotic and utopian campaign of all. It dreams the impossible dream of a world that has abolished war.

World Beyond War is a daring attempt to imagine a world at peace, and then organize for the creation of such a world. More than 4,000 people have signed its Declaration of Peace, pledging to work nonviolently to end all wars.

Hartsough recently returned from a trip to Southeast Asia. He met with peace activists in South Korea and joined priests and nuns on Jeju Island protesting the construction of a massive military base at the port of Gangjeong by nonviolently blocking bulldozers and cement trucks.

He then spent two weeks in Vietnam as part of a Veterans for Peace delegation hosted by a group of American Vietnam veterans living in Vietnam.

Hartsough had been arrested many times during the Vietnam War for acts of resistance to the bombings and battlefield atrocities. He also was a full-time lobbyist hired by the Friends Committee on National Legislation to try to stop the Vietnam War in the 1960s. His work was to lobby Congress and interact with peace groups around the country. Hartsough and other Quakers were arrested week after week for reading the names of the war dead to the U.S. Congress.

When I asked what it felt like to finally travel to Vietnam for the first time after spending so many years of his life organizing to end the war, he called it a profoundly emotional homecoming. "In a way, it was just like coming home," he said. Yet, he was coming home to a place he had never even visited before this year.

He explained, "I had put in so many hours every day when I was a Quaker lobbyist trying to help members of Congress and the American people understand the reality of what that war was doing to the people of Vietnam. I was arrested and jailed a number of times for trying to prevent the bombs and weapons from being sent to Vietnam, and to stop the horrendous war the United States was inflicting on them. But I had never been there.

"So it was like coming home to get to know the Vietnamese people. Here is my family that I really cared deeply about, but I had never met them. And the friendliness and the openness of the Vietnamese people was so deeply moving to me."

It was hard to fathom the friendliness and humanity he found in a land ravaged by U.S. bombs and where the toxic aftereffects of Agent Orange have created an epidemic of human suffering.

"It was my country that had dropped millions of tons of bombs and Agent Orange, and the unexploded ordnance from that war is still killing their children now," he said. "Yet, their humanity to us, as Americans, was just mind-boggling. If some other country had bombed the United States to smithereens, and 30 years later they came to the U.S., I can't imagine we'd be inviting them into our homes, and be so friendly and open with them."

It is a small miracle, this friendliness from the citizens of a country that the U.S. targeted with saturation bombing, napalm and anti-personnel weapons.

The word "Friend" is synonymous with the word "Quaker." It seems fitting that a Friend from North America would find friends in Vietnam — a country that he had always steadfastly refused to believe was an enemy.